

CHARLES PENDEXTER DUR





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# THE SKIPPER OF THE CYNTHIA B.

BY
CHARLES PENDEXTER DURELL

HAROLD BRETT

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CAPTAIN THOMAS CHATFIELD

A Mariner of the Old School



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### **FOREWORD**

I am deeply grateful for the inspiration and kindly encouragement which I have received from Professor Dallas Lore Sharp in the preparation of this book. I appreciate, also, the friendly assistance of Captain Thomas Chatfield and Captain Freeman S. Hodges, from whose nautical experience I have gained much.

Acknowledgment is due the Youths' Companion for the courtesy of allowing Ben Peter's story to be reprinted in these pages.

C. P. D.



## THE SKIPPER OF THE CYNTHIA B.

### CHAPTER I

#### SAMUEL HOTCHKISS COMES TO CAPE COD

"IVELL, young man, what are you going to do with yourself to-day?" inquired Captain Seth Nickerson pleasantly of Samuel Hotchkiss.

"I don't know," said the boy.

Five persons were seated at the breakfast table in Captain Nickerson's sunny dining room: the Captain, his wife Cynthia, Mr. and Mrs. Hotchkiss and Samuel, their son, a lad of fourteen.

The Hotchkiss family had come from Boston the evening before to spend their first summer on Cape Cod. Sam had been highly disgusted at the idea of spending two long months on this spit of sand, instead of having his kind of a good time. The quiet of Cape Cod had no attraction for him. He didn't

want a quiet summer. He wanted to be where there was something going on; Newport, Bar Harbor or most any place but this.

The family physician had ordered Mr. Hotchkiss to have absolute rest from his business as a wholesale lumber merchant, and had recommended this little village of Saquoit, the home of his own boyhood, as the very place in which to smooth out the jangling nerves of his patient. He had persuaded his cousin, Captain Seth Nickerson, to take the Boston family into his home.

Samuel, in a way, felt sorry that his father should be ill, just as he would have felt sorry for any one of his father's friends whom he knew in Boston. He usually met his father once a day, and that was at dinner. Through the day he saw nothing of him at all, and felt no close acquaintance with him.

There seemed to be nothing for Sam to do but to come with his parents to Cape Cod, but he hated it, oh, how he hated it! He had seen Cape Cod pictured in his geography as just a crook of sand running out into the sea. From all he could learn it was dead, very dead.

He was in the dumps. He thought to himself that there would be no movies, no parties, no ball games: nothing for a fellow to do but hang around and wait for the end of the summer to come. They couldn't even bring an automobile. The doctor had refused to allow his father to do this. He was a funny old duck, this doctor. Called automobiles "The invention of the devil to help people to move faster when they didn't need to."

"Use your legs, man," he had said to Mr. Hotchkiss. "You've been riding too much as it is. Your legs are for walking, and not for reaching to the floor of a limousine."

That morning Sam got out of bed grumbling to himself, and when he thought of the countless mornings that he would have to face a day with nothing to do, he grumbled and pitied himself all the more.

His answer to Captain Nickerson's inquiry was entirely honest, if it did sound a bit sour, for he didn't know what he was going to do with himself, on this or any succeeding morning.

Captain Nickerson helped himself to another supply of waffles and syrup before he spoke again. In appearance, the Captain was the typical "Cape Codder" whose life had been spent on the sea. He was deep chested, keen eyed, and though genial in manner, he gave one the idea that on a vessel's deck he had been truly in command.

He knew boys, for he had one of his own, now a man grown and master of a schooner in the South American trade.

"Wal," he began, "I cal'lated I might git out to the Hoss Shoe in the Cat to-day and have an interview with three or four tautog there is out there. I don't suppose you'd care to go, Mr. Hotchkiss, but I thought the boy might."

"Thank you, Captain Nickerson. When I feel a little more like myself, I shall be very glad to go with you, but now, I guess I'll just

take it easy," replied Mr. Hotchkiss.

"How about you, son?" said the old skipper, turning to Samuel.

Samuel thought perhaps he might as well go. He felt no particular desire to do so, but anything, even a stupid morning with this old man, was better than just staying around in this little one horse town. "You have been retired from the sea for some time, have you not?" asked Mr. Hotch-

kiss politely.

"From active sea duty aboard a vessel, yes," the Captain answered, "but I never git away from the water over night that I don't feel uneasy. I'm retired from the sea, I suppose you'd call it, but I'm on it half of the time still."

"It is no doubt a relief to give up the responsibilities of as busy a life as yours must have been, and settle down here with nothing in particular to do," remarked the merchant, a bit enviously.

"Why, bless your heart, nothin' to do! I'm the busiest man there is anywheres about. In summer I have considerbul fishin' to do, and in winter I mend sails and other folks' business," said he with a twinkle in his eye.

Uncle Seth, for as such Captain Nickerson was known by nearly everybody in town, was a sort of village "fixer." That was what he meant, when he spoke of "mendin' other folks' business," for he was consulted widely concerning all sorts of troubles and difficul-

ties, from oyster grants, to careers for children.

"Where was it you said you were going?" asked Sam, as he and Captain Nickerson walked away from the house. "You said something about some horseshoe place in a cat."

"Ha, ha, I forgot, you ain't a Cape Codder, not yit, are you? The Hoss Shoe is a reef 'bout three miles off shore, and the Cat is my catboat," he explained.

"Why is it called a cat? I thought cats were afraid of the water," remarked Samuel, a little more amiably.

"Wal, that's so, I never thought of that. But you've heard about sunthin' that's quicker'n a cat, haven't ye? Wal, I reckon that's the reason. It's a good one anyway, so we'll call it the right one."

They rowed out to the sailboat in the sunshine, with the water of the inland bay sparkling and blue. The little boats, scattered about, bobbed and tugged at their moorings. The green hills around the blue, blue water, framed a picture that made Sam tingle. He was undemonstrative, but Captain Nickerson,

watching him, caught the gleam in his eyes.

"Looks good, don't it, son?" he ventured. Without waiting for Sam to answer, he continued, "I never git tired of comin' down here and jest lookin'. Seems sorter fresh and clean, as though everything about had been dressed up special.

"Ever done much boatin'?" asked the old

Captain.

"No, I never was in a sailboat. Mother was always nervous and didn't want me to, and I didn't want to myself anyway."

"Sho, now that's too bad," mused his brownfaced companion. "By the way, what's your

name?"

"Samuel Hotchkiss."

"No, I mean what do your friends call you, when they know you real well?"

"The bunch generally call me Sam," replied the boy, smiling. He could not help

smiling at so genial a companion.

"Wal, I reckon I'll foller the bunch and call you Sam too. Now, Sam, my bunch generally call me Uncle Seth, so you may call me that, eh," chuckled the Captain.

"All right, Uncle Seth," grinned Sam.

"There now, that's real friendly. I allus like to feel friendly with my crew. If you are aimin' to ship as fust mate with me, I reckon the next thing is to learn the name of our craft. There she is," said he, pointing to a twenty odd footer.

She looked very trim, and her white paint glistened, as she bowed and curtesied to the westerly breeze. To a boy acquainted with boats, she would have appeared well built for weather, with a small cabin forward, and yet her lines indicated speed from her gently sloping bow to her square stern.

"Cynthia B.," read Sam. "What a funny name! Did you name her and why didn't you put on the rest of it? Cynthia B. what?"

"Yes, I named her, and built her too. She's named for about the nicest gal I ever run up with," said the old sailor seriously.

"Oh, I know, it's Mrs. Nickerson, for I heard you call her by name. I'm sorry I called it funny. I think it's bully," apologized Sam.

"There warn't room 'nough to put on the last name and I'll tell ye why I put on the 'B,' after the Cynthy. There is a superstition

among sailor men about the names for vessels. They never aim to have the name of any craft end with the letter 'A.' Think she'll be unlucky or some sech bunk. Aunt Cynthy is a leetle mite superstitious, though she wouldn't admit it, so when I told her I was goin' to name my new boat Cynthy, I could see that there was sunthin' about it that bothered her and finally she said that the name ended with the letter 'A,' and that wouldn't do, nohow. I told her that the way I said it, it ended with 'Y,' but she allowed she warn't goin' to have her name spelled wrong on a boat right out n the face and eyes of everybuddy. So I satisfied the sailorman's superstition in her by addin' her middle initial 'B,' for Bascom," he chuckled.

Uncle Seth began to shake out the sail.

"Stand by and heave short," he bellowed in mock sternness, to Sam's great delight. The boy knew nothing of what the order meant, so Uncle Seth explained that he was supposed to pull the anchor off the bottom, but since the Cynthia B. didn't have an anchor out, he wished him simply to untie the painter.

"Haul on that throat haly'd and make fast," he roared again. This time Sam sprang to obey quickly, for the old Captain indicated with his foot the rope and the cleat where it was to be fastened. Sam enjoyed this nautical by-play.

In a few moments they were skimming along over the harbor on the way to the fishing grounds. The boy forgot that he had felt disgruntled earlier in the day. The glittering waves, the tang of the salt air, the easy motion of the boat, together with the fact that he found Uncle Seth such a pleasant chap, made him forget everything, except that he was having the time of his life.

"Now, Sam, I'm on the port tack," explained Uncle Seth. "You know the port side of any craft is the left lookin' towards the bow, and the starbud is the right. You come here and take holt of the tiller with me and I'll tell ye jest what I am doin'. We're beatin' to the wind'ard, or ag'in the wind, and I want to keep her headed up into the wind enough so she'll gain distance and at the same time keep her off some, or away from

the wind, so the sail will be full. Allus remember when you're beatin', to keep her full and by."

Sam was quick to grasp what the old seaman was trying to teach him. He learned that he must watch the fly at the mast head, which indicated the way the wind was blowing, and keep the sail at just about such an angle with it.

"How'd you like to learn to sail a boat,

Sam?" Captain Seth asked at length.

"Oh, I'd love it," exclaimed the boy. He had been thrilled with pleasure during every moment of the ride, and what boy of fourteen wouldn't be, when having his first sail!

"It'll take some little time for ye to learn," explained the old man, "but when ye once learn as I learn ye, you won't never fergit it. Lots of summer folks come down here, and after a few trips they think they can sail a boat all right, and so they can, if everything goes smooth, and it don't come on puffy. Take 'em in a tight place though and most likely some of us will have to come and fish 'em out of the water. Now see here, I don't want you to try sailin' alone, till I give ye the word. Any green hand that tries goin' it alone, ought to be keel hauled."

Sam promised. "You said the Horse Shoe was over there, why do you steer over this

way?" he asked.

Uncle Seth pointed out the buoys, and explained that the channel did not follow a straight course.

"You see that light green water? Wal, that's shaller, and I'd run aground if I tried to go over it, except at high water. Now it's shout helf tide and I demon't try it."

about half tide and I darsen't try it."

When they reached the Horse Shoe, Uncle Seth bawled to the "Fust Mate" to heave over the anchor. In a few minutes they baited up and Sam began his experience as a fisherman. He had hardly let out ten feet of his line, when he felt a tug.

"I've got something," he yelled, springing

to his feet. "What'll I do?"

"Pull him in," responded Uncle Seth complacently, bobbing away with his own hand line.

Sam began to pull hand over hand. "It must be a whale, it pulls so hard," he thought.

When he got it within a few feet of the surface, the fish darted this way and that with amazing swiftness. The stout line cut into his fingers, but he hung on and kept pulling.

"Don't haul him in too quick or he may break away," cautioned the Captain. "Keep your line taut. Don't give him any slack, but don't hurry him, for you don't know how well you've gut him hooked.

"Jimminetty, I've gut one," Uncle Seth exclaimed and began to haul in his own line.

Both fish came over the side at about the same time, and Sam's was the heavier by a good pound. Was he elated? Was he puffed up with pride? Do you remember your first five-pound fish?

"Wal, that's sartin a J. W. Linger," said Uncle Seth, looking at Sam's tautog, "and you handled him fustrate too. Didn't know but what he'd git away from ye one spell, but he didn't. I ain't seen a tautog this season that heats him."

Although Sam caught two other tautog during the forenoon, and Uncle Seth four, there was not one in the lot that matched Sam's first in size and weight.

"Do you have any special way of baiting a hook, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam.

"Wal, mebbe so. When I bait a hook," the old man explained, "I take a leetle more pains than most folks. I allus try to fix up the bait attractive like. Might jest as well be perticerler, for mebbe the fish are jest as fussy as humans about how their victuals are served up to 'em."

Sam remembered that this was not exactly his first experience at fishing. He had fished with a small pole from a wharf, at a place

they were visiting one summer. He thought now of this wharf fishing with disgust. He had caught one or two very small fish, called pumpkin seeds, in which he had not taken the slightest interest when he found they were not edible and he would not be allowed to take them home. But this was different. This was regular he-man sport. Look at the size of them! My, how that first tautog of his had pulled! He looked at his catch: he

"Are they good to eat?" he asked of Uncle Seth.

measured him with his eye.

"Wal, I ruther think, when Aunt Cynthy fixes 'em up, and they come on to the table all brown, with plenty of good sweet butter on 'em, that you'll say they're the best thing in the shape of fish you ever eat. But then, everything that Cynthy sets out in the victuals line allus makes me think, that up to date, it's the best thing I ever tasted.

"Gittin' hungry, are ve, Sam?"

"Yes, sir, I am," said Sam.

Uncle Seth looked at his huge silver watch. "Imminetty," he exclaimed, "I didn't know 'twas past twelve. Time to eat and no mistake." He pulled in his own line, told Sam to do the same while he himself was hoisting the anchor.

"Guess we'll run over to the Neck and have dinner," said the Captain.

"Oh, is there a hotel near?" asked Sam, who felt that he couldn't wait much longer for something to eat.

"Wal, no, not exactly, but I guess we can git filled up," he grinned.

Sam was disappointed, for his hopes had risen, when dinner at the Neck had been mentioned. He wished for a regular meal, he did; no snack handed out at some farmhouse. Uncle Seth pointed the little craft for a narrow strip of land covered with scrub pines down to the white beach.

"Now, we'll jest rest easy and git up our appetites. I can make it without tackin', I reckon," said he, settling back comfortably at the tiller and pulling his hat over his eyes.

Sam was hungry as a bear, and the promise of anything short of a big dinner was not at all to his liking.

"I don't see any houses where we can get dinner," he remarked a bit gruffly.

"Ha, ha, so you don't! Jest you open that cabin door and you'll see where," the old man grinned.

Sam did as he was told, and on a pine box with brass handles at the top, he saw painted, "Astor House." He turned to Uncle Seth for further explanation. The old sailor's eyes twinkled.

"Never mind, Sam, I know what you've been thinkin'. You said to yourself, 'Here I am hungry enough to eat a b'iled owl, and all we're goin' to git is a cold hand out of

left overs, from some farmhouse.' Ain't I right now?"

Sam confessed that he had guessed pretty near.

"Wal, suh," the Captain went on, "if you don't have enough of good victuals when we git on shore, so you're plum satisfied. I swan to man, if I won't swim all the way back home."

Uncle Seth pulled up the center board and ran up as near the beach as he dared. This time Sam was ready without orders to heave the anchor. Now they unloaded such things into the tender from the Cynthia B. as Uncle Seth wished to carry ashore. Among the parcels was a small oil stove.

"Have to take this," he explained, as he handed the stove over the side to Sam, who stood in the tender. "It's dangerous, besides bein' ag'in the law, to have a fire in the open without a permit."

Captain Nickerson beached the smaller boat and with Sam's help hauled it well up. Then taking a pail and dipper walked up from the beach to what he told Sam was the high water mark; there Sam saw pure bubbling spring water which came up out of the earth into a pebbled-lined basin. Uncle Seth passed a dipperful to the boy.

Sam looked at it doubtfully. "Is it salt?"

he asked.

"Salt, no, and that's queer now, ain't it,

right nigh the salt water so."

Sam was glad that his question had not appeared ridiculous. That was one of the pleasantest things about Uncle Seth, he never made fun of a fellow, no matter what his question, but patiently explained. Sam found the water ice cold, and as clear as a dewdrop. He was astonished that fresh water could be found so near the ocean and so near the ocean level.

"You'll find these springs even below high water mark," declared Uncle Seth. "Another strange feature of it is that if you drive a pipe, with a solid p'int at the end of it and holes in the sides, you can pump clear fresh drinkin' water twenty foot nigher the water's edge than this."

Uncle Seth opened the "Astor House," and took from it bacon, sliced thin, which he placed in the "Spider" upon the oil stove.

He told Sam to keep turning the bacon to prevent its scorching, while he dressed and washed one of the larger tautog. When the fish was prepared and rolled in corn meal and flour, he dropped sections of it into the bacon fat, where it sputtered and sizzled until it was a delicious brown, if a color may be called delicious.

"That smells great," said Sam.

"Let's see what Aunt Cynthy put in for us," said Uncle Seth, as he rummaged in the box. "I go off like this so often that I made this box and lined it with zinc. It's real handy, and saves messin' 'round with paper bags and boxes."

He lay the entire larder of the Astor House upon the cover, and indeed, without the fish, it looked to Sam as though Uncle Seth would ride home in the Cynthia B., instead of swimming. There were sandwiches of white bread with plenty of jam between, sandwiches of brown bread with curd cheese for filler, luscious crispy doughnuts, two thermos bottles, one filled with coffee for Uncle Seth, the other with milk for Sam.

"My innards need warmin' more'n your'n

do," said he with a little chuckle, as he passed Sam the milk.

Sam ate as he never ate before. It seemed to him that he never tasted anything as good as that tautog.

Uncle Seth urged him to eat slowly, for he said, "You can eat more, if you chew your victuals; packs 'em down snugger it allus seems to me, and, you know, you want to eat a lot, for—now that makes me think of Aunt Abbie Yates, that useter live over to the Mills.

"Aunt Abbie was a curious sort of an old lady, who was allus lookin' for new symptoms. That's a fact, yes, suh. Useter have a new pain somewheres every time you see her. The neighbors would say to her, 'Howdy do, Aunt Abbie; where's your pain to-day?' She never seemed to mind none, or take offense at it. It kinder tickled her cause she thought folks was sympathizin' with her. She talked so much about her ailmunts, that finally they urged her to see a doctor.

"Old Doctor Talbot looked her over and found her as sound as a nut, nothin' the matter with her at all, but the old man was a wise one. He knew that if he told her she was a well woman, she'd be madder'n a wet hen, so he looks solemn and says, 'Miss Yates, what you need is plenty of good victuals, for your victuals is all that's keepin' you alive.'

"Wal, I tell ye the old lady was purty pleased to find she was in sech a serious condition. She would come into our house after that and we never had to give her a second invitation to set up and eat with us.

"'Don't care if I do,' she'd squeak. 'Doctor Talbot says that I must eat aplenty, fer my victuals is all that's keepin' me alive and if it warn't fer them, I'd been dead long ago.'

"Jimminetty," exclaimed Uncle Seth, "here's one other thing that Cynthy put in. I thought I needed sunthin' more, to fill in an extry chink!" He brought forth a flaky crusted apple pie.

Sam had eaten of everything in the Astor House, until it seemed as though he had no "Extry Chink," to fill in, but that pie looked

good, and Sam was fond of pie.

"'Twixt two fellers, like you and me, out sportin'," remarked Uncle Seth, with knife poised above the pie, "there's jest one proper way to cut pie, and that is, so fashion, right straight across the middle."

Sam ate his half to the last crumb and washed it down with a drink of good rich milk. He was full, almost too full, he admitted, but, hadn't it all been good!

"There, son, what do you think of the meenoo of the Astor House?" asked the old sea captain, when they had packed everything aboard the tender and were lying stretched at full length, on the sandy beach.

"It's the best meal I ever ate anywhere, Uncle Seth," said Sam, "and I've had a bully time."

"Now ain't that nice. I was afraid you might be one of them fellers that had so much city life and excitement, that our simple "pleasures like fishin', and sailin', and—eatin'," he added with a chuckle, "might not appeal to you. I'm mighty glad you are a regerler feller that has a good time anywheres."

Sam felt himself reddening at the last remark, and he looked sharply at the old Captain to see if he was, perhaps, poking fun at him, but his companion's face was entirely serious.

"I like to see a boy or man enjoy himself and have a good time, in the right way," he continued. "I sartin do. I have a good time doin' every single thing I put my hand to, if it's weedin' onions, or wringin' Aunt Cynthy's washin'. A feller's gut to enter right in to what he's doin', in order to have a fustrate time. Good many folks don't want to bother to git into things hearty enough to really enjoy themselves. Lazy they are, I reckon.

"I agree with Ike Potts over to Rushy Marsh. Ike says, 'I've made up my mind, that the only way to enjoy Nantasket Beach, is to go there yourself.'

"Wal, son, I guess it's time we was movin'."

### CHAPTER II

#### HOW UNCLE SETH FIRST WENT TO SEA

THE next morning Sam was awakened by the rain falling upon the sloping roof above his head. Rain, oh, hang! No lesson in sailing, no fishing to-day. He sprang out of bed and as he dressed his hopes grew, for he had faith in Uncle Seth, after yesterday's experience.

Sam had gone to bed early the evening before. Soon after supper, he had been so sleepy that he had almost fallen out of his chair, as he tried to listen to the conversation in the little "settin' room." His father and mother had passed a pleasant day too, it seemed, sitting on the beach and walking about the quaint village.

Sam found both his parents down stairs, ready for breakfast. Mrs. Hotchkiss had not

been troubled with insomnia, as she was usually.

"I was so tired, I just dropped off to sleep before I knew it," she remarked to Uncle Seth, who came in from doing his chores. "I sometimes lie awake half the night at home, unless I take a sedative."

"Wal, I can't say that I was ever troubled that way," grinned the Captain. "I never seemed to make up my sleep that I lost when I used to stand watch on the vessel. Ma allus says that when I come courtin' her, I'd go to sleep when she was doin' her best to be entertainin'."

In response to Aunt Cynthia's call, they all sat down to the breakfast table. Uncle Seth tucked his napkin under his chin and as he served, he commented upon the weather.

"Do you know," he said, "I've been wantin' this rainy day. There's heaps of things I've been aimin' to do, but we've had such a spell of dry weather I haven't had a chance."

"What in the world can you do on a rainy day, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam in surprise.

"Why, Samuel," remonstrated his mother,

"you are rather familiar with Captain Nickerson."

"That's all right, marm," explained the Captain. "I told him to call me that. I reckon I'm Uncle Seth to more'n half the boys and gals in this town and most of the grown ups too. When anybuddy says Cap'n Nickerson, I have to look around to see who they're talkin' to."

"I'll tell ye what I'm goin' to do, Sam," he said, "Jim Ellis tore his sail about a week ago, and he's at me every day er so, to mend it. Don't see why he couldn't do it himself."

"Seth makes and repairs sails all winter,"

explained his wife.

"All surmer, too, for that matter," said Uncle Seth. "Don't have the big sails to fix though, as we used to. I've seen twenty-five schooners anchored in Deep Hole at one time in the old days. They're all gone now, steam tooter's gut 'em beat."

"I think I'd like to watch you fix the sail,

if you don't mind," said Sam.

"Bless your heart, I don't mind," responded Uncle Seth quickly. "Like to have ye. I can work and visit with ye at the same time. Work better with somebuddy to talk to, I reckon."

"Now Jim did sure tear that sail," said Uncle Seth, a little later, as he spread the torn sail upon the floor of what he called the "Sail Loft." "He sartin did tear it. I'll have to set in a whole new section. One of the boarders, up at the Inn, come right up to the wharf 'fore the wind when Jim was jest startin' out with a sailin' party. Wouldn't you think a grown man would know better than that?"

"What happened—did he run into Jim's boat?" asked Sam.

"No, he didn't run into him, but he jibed and his boom, which was a long one, swung into Jim's sail and ripped the stuffin' out of it."

"What should he have done?"

"Oughter made a sweep 'round, and headed her up into the wind; then she'd come up to the wharf as gentle as a kitten ag'in yer trousers leg."

He ripped out the tattered section, and fitted a new one in its place from clean white canvas. Then, seating himself on his four legged bench, he pulled the sail across his knees. The four legs of his peculiarly constructed bench canted out, like the legs of an old-fashioned milking stool. The bench itself was about four feet long, a foot wide, and stood no higher from the floor than the seat of an ordinary chair. In one end was a hole, which formed the opening for a small canvas bag or pocket. Uncle Seth took from this pocket a large ball of stout twine, some beeswax, and a leather band which he slipped on his hand covering the palm. In fact, this leather contrivance, with the metal disk in its center, is called a "palm" and is used to push the needle through the tough canvas. He waxed the twine and was ready to sew.

Sam watched him with eager interest, for he had never seen a man sew, and, although not used to manual work himself, he could not help being fascinated by the skill and neatness with which Uncle Seth plied his needle.

"Why, Uncle Seth, you could almost be a tailor!"

"I reckon it would be purty curious clothes I'd make, Sam," grinned the Captain, "but, do you know, regular sailors in my time could mend clothes. They had to, by Jimminetty, when we was off for three or five year at a time on whalin' voyages. Yes, suh, every sailor that was a sailor had a little box that he called his 'Ditty Box.' In this he had all the fixin's for mendin' and patchin' clothes needles, thread, scissors, wax, in fact most of the things that you find in a woman's work hasket"

"What are those holes for in the new piece you are setting in the sail, button holes?" laughed Sam, pointing to a series of small perforations which Uncle Seth had punched in a row at the bottom of the sail.

The sail maker inserted a small brass ring in one of these holes, and sewed it over and over to the canvas, until the brass was entirely covered.

"Them's grummets," he explained. "If the brass warn't covered, it would wear away the rope yarn that goes through the hole purty quick."

"They look easy to make," ventured Sam. "Want to try makin' one? Guess you can do it, but they ain't so easy till you've had a leetle practice."

Sam did try, and under Uncle Seth's patient instruction, he finally completed some-

thing that looked quite like a grummet.

"Now that's what I call purty good, for the fust time tryin'," praised the old man. "Jimminetty, I remember what a mess I made of the fust few I tried to make. I sartin' was all thumbs."

"Why, Uncle Seth, did you have to learn? I suppose you did, of course, but it seems to me that any one born on Cape Cod would

know how anyway," laughed Sam.

"You might think so, but, you see, I ain't a Cape Codder by birth. I'm a kind of a 'step,' or 'adopted' Cape Codder. I was a land-lubber until I was a little older than you are now. I was born up in New York State, a durned long way from salt water. In fact, I never caught a glimpse of the ocean till I was nigh sixteen."

"How did you happen to go to sea, Uncle

Seth?" asked Sam eagerly.

"My, that's a long story. Wal, I'll tell ye. "We lived up in New York State, as I said. My father, mother, four brothers and a sister: quite a family of us, warn't there? Times was hard and father had all he could do, I reckon, to keep his head above water and feed us all. We went to school a few months in the winter, and, when any of us got big enough, we went to work. I was at work in a cotton factory when I was thirteen, and that was awful, too. I jest couldn't seem to stand bein' cooped up in that mill.

"After a year or so of that, I got peeked lookin' and white. No wonder, fer 'twas hard for a growin' boy to be hived up in that mill twelve or fourteen hours every day. There warn't no eight hour business in them days, nor child labor laws, neither. I knew there was sunthin' better for me to do somewheres. I reckon it was the old ocean callin' to me, though I couldn't tell it then. My Grandsir Nickerson had been a sailor, and mebbe I inherited some salt water in my blood from him.

"I stuck to the cotton mill, but, Jimminetty, how I hated it! I wasn't lazy, for I'd work like a trojan in the garden or anywhere outdoors, but real money was to be had in the mill, and not at farm work at that time.

"I quit eatin' the way I should, and mother

dosed me with thoroughwort tea, but, bless ye, that warn't what I needed. We didn't have much to do with doctors; didn't have money enough, for one thing, so Ma done what doctorin' there was done. I grew wuss, instead of better, and Ma was at her wit's end.

"To make a long story short, as the feller said when somebuddy asked him why he tore the cupola off his barn, Uncle Andrew come to visit us. Uncle Andrew was Pa's brother, and they hadn't seen each other for years. Pa had come up to New York State, to work in the tannery, when Andrew was nothin' but a little feller. Andrew had followed his father's trade, the sea. At this time he had come to Albany, with a load er sunthin' er ruther, and had taken it into his head to come up and see Pa.

"After he'd stayed with us a couple of days, I see him lookin' me over purty sharp, and all of a sudden, he says to Pa and Ma, 'What's the matter with that boy? He looks off his feed to me.'

"Ma told him how I didn't eat, and she'd gin me everything she could think of, and it didn't do no good.

"'Wal,' he says, 'I know what ails him. He's got an overdose of cotton mill. Let me have him for a year or two and you won't know him for the same lad.'

"I jumped nigh out er my skin at that, I tell ye. What he meant was for me to go with him on his vessel. He had told us that jest as soon as he could git back with this coastin' vessel, he cal'lated to start for the Pacific, as master of a whale ship that was bein' fitted out at Edgartown. Ma wouldn't listen to it at fust.

"'Ain't it dangerous?' says she, fer Ma was brought up inland.

"'Never hurt me none,' laughed Uncle

Andrew.

"'Want to go, Bub?' he says to me.

"'Yes, sir,' I says, faint like, my heart

poundin' like a trip-hammer.

"The upshot of it all was, that, with my teasin', and Uncle Andrew brushin' away their objections, they decided to let me go. Uncle Andrew said he'd buy what clothes I needed for ship board when we got to Albany, so there warn't much packin' up to do. I was wild. I was so tickled, I didn't know what to do. Boy like, I don't s'pose I thought how Pa and Ma hated to have me go. All I thought was how I wanted to be with Uncle Andrew. Ma's eyes were purty watery for a day or two, but Uncle Andrew told her so often how big and husky I would be when I come back, that she finally chirked up, and said she guessed she was glad I had the chance.

"I expect I was purty chesty among the boys. I mentioned, casual like, that I expected to sail around to the Pacific Ocean lookin' for whales in a month or so, and when they found out that it was true, Jimminetty, they all pestered their folks to death tryin' to git 'em to ask Uncle Andrew to take them along too. If he'd shipped all the boys in the village that wanted to go with him, I reckon he'd have had to pin 'em to the riggin', like clothes on a line, to have any room for his cargo. In a few days, Uncle Andrew and I took the stage to Albany, and there I had my fust sight of a regerler coastin' schooner."

"Oh, then this wasn't the vessel that you went whaling in?" asked Sam.

"Oh, no, this was a schooner, the J. P. Bas-

sett. A whale ship is generally a square rigger."

Uncle Seth stopped his sewing, while he made a rough sketch of both kinds of vessels with a stub of a pencil.

"There, that'll give ye an idea. I tell ye that was a wonderful trip to me. Everything was new and entertainin'. I didn't git a chance to git homesick. I slept in Uncle Andrew's cabin and 'twas comfortable quarters. We had good weather to Boston and everything went off fine. As the Advertiser says, 'a good time was had by all,'" chuckled the old Captain.

"That's how I come to go to sea, Sam, and that sail is done and now Jim will quit pesterin' me about it."

# CHAPTER III

### UNCLE SETH NIPS MUTINY IN THE BUD

NE afternoon, Uncle Seth asked Sam if he would help him make crab nets. The boy was glad to do anything that the old skipper suggested, for, by this time, he had found chores, that sounded dull and commonplace, great fun with Uncle Seth as a partner. Certainly, Sam would help make crab nets. He hadn't the ghost of an idea how they were put together, but as usual, he had faith in the old sailor.

How could he ever have dreaded a summer on Cape Cod! Of course, he hadn't known there were so many things to do, or so many things to learn that were interesting: above all, he had not known Uncle Seth. Now the days were so full and overflowing he hadn't time to be lonesome or bored. When bedtime came, after a day in the open, he was so

dog tired that he could scarcely undress and crawl into his smooth, comfortable bed, before he was fast asleep.

There was just enough cold in the air this afternoon, to make the shelter of the long sunny sail loft agreeable to them both. Uncle Seth brought forth two slender poles, ten or twelve feet long, each with an iron hoop secured to the end. Upon these iron hoops the nets were to be hung.

"There, now," said Uncle Seth. "You foller me and do jest as I do. They ain't hard to make; it's kinder fun after you get at it."

Sam watched, and with a word now and then from his instructor, he soon acquired the knack of cross tying the strands of the net. It was fun, just as Uncle Seth said, even if it was almost like girls' fancy work.

"This is easier even than whipping a rope's end," remarked Sam, who had learned from Uncle Seth how to bind a rope to keep the ends from unraveling.

"Oh, yes, much easier," agreed the Captain.
"Let's see, I haven't showed you how to do a long splice yet, have I? That'll come next."

"You taught me to make an eye splice and

a short splice, and I have practiced those a lot. What was that other thing you said you'd teach me?"

"Turks Head?" suggested Uncle Seth.

"Yes, that's it. When I get home I'm going to buy a piece of rope and practice making all the knots and splices I've learned. When you first went to sea, did you begin to learn all these things right away, Uncle Seth?" he asked.

"Wal, no, not right away," the old man replied. "You see, I had more or less work to do, runnin' errands all about the ship, and nobuddy had time to teach me."

"I think it must have been great going to sea when you were only fifteen or so. Did you ever shoot any whales yourself? Weren't there exciting times?" asked Sam, one ques-

tion piling upon another.

"You've asked a lot of questions all at once," laughed Uncle Seth. "They don't generally shoot whales, or they didn't when I fust went to sea. After a while, they begun to use bomb lances, but the real old time whaler never gut used to 'em. I never used a bomb gun very much, allus harpooned and then killed 'em

with a hand lance. Excitin', wal, mebbe it was to me, as a boy, but after a while it was jest the day's work. Howsomever, I had a good time."

"How big is a whale that you kill by hand?" asked Sam.

"Some of 'em big, and some of 'em small; but a good sized whale is, mebbe, seventy-five foot long," replied Uncle Seth, to Sam's amazement.

"Why, that is longer than this house, ell and all!"

"Yes, considerbul longer."

"I had no idea they were as big as that," said the boy.

"Oh, they ain't no pan fish, I can tell ve. To tell the truth, they ain't a fish at all, they're mammals. What whalemen used to call a 'sixty barrel whale' er a 'hundred barrel whale,' sech as I have seen, would probably weigh 'tween sixty and eighty ton. When they're born, sperm whales are fourteen foot long, mebbe," declared the old whaleman.

"Weren't you ever frightened of a whale?

asked Sam, bound to have a story.

"Sho, course I have been. Who wouldn't

be? I warn't so 'fraid at the time as I was afterwards thinkin' about it, mebbe, but I cal'late I've been purty scared sometimes at that. Fust voyage I went on, of course, I didn't have much to do with whales, 'cause I warn't nothin' but a boy, but I was scared jest the same," said Uncle Seth.

"What were you afraid of, Uncle Seth, storms?" asked Sam.

"No, afraid of some men," he laughed. "I'll tell ye about it. On that fust voyage, we sailed out of Edgartown, where we fitted ship, along about November: sailed direct for Cape Horn. 'Cause, this was a long time before the Panama Canal was put through, and there warn't nothin' else to do but go around the Horn to git into the Pacific. Cape Horn is a bad place, and every ship's cap'n allus breathes easier when he's well around it. We was purty lucky though, as I'll tell ye. We rounded the Cape in the latter part of January, which is the middle of the summer in the Southern hemisphere, you know."

Sam nodded.

"Wal, suh, we went round the old Horn under full sail with a fair wind. Jest think of

that. I never done it afterwards, in all my sailin'. We sailed up the west coast of South America and made our fust port at Callao, Peru.

"The usual thing, I found, was for the men to have three days' shore leave, when a port was made, so they could git a change of diet. This was in the days before canned goods, and the main feed on a whale ship was salt meat, salt fish and sech. The vegetables they brought from home port wouldn't last a great while, so purty soon they had to have some fresh things to eat, er the crew'd come down with scurvy. That was bad for the crew and bad for the ship, to have half her crew laid up, and run short handed. Scurvy was a turrible disease, but 'twas found out 'fore long that, with shore leave and change of victuals, the chances of it gittin' a holt on board ship was slim. As I say, we made Callao to git pertaters, onions and so on, and have our water casks filled up."

"They must have had canned goods for a long time, Uncle Seth. How long ago was this?" asked Sam.

"'Twas ten years after gold was discovered

in Californy. Know when it was now?" asked the old Captain with a smile.

"Yes, sir, 1859," answered Sam promptly. "That's right. We knew about gold in Californy, but it appeared they'd made a new strike somewheres out there, and folks was crazy over the news; 'specially people not native of the place. Sech stories as was passin' 'round about gold bein' scraped up most anywhere in the new diggin's. I cal'late some of them fellers actually thought all they had to do was to git there and grab a bagful and run for home.

"They offered all kinds of money for a passage. The crew went ashore, and so did Uncle Andrew and me. Them gold crazy folks pestered him so much, and begged so hard, that finally he give in, and agreed to take a dozen or so with him. The ship's carpenter cleared away between decks and built some bunks for 'em to sleep in, and we cleared for San Francisco along in May. We'd stayed longer at Callao than Uncle Andrew had meant to, but we was delayed for one thing and another.

"Them gold hunters was a mixed lot, I tell

ye. None of 'em very choice companions; gamblers and adventurers from all over the world.

"As a cabin boy I was all over the ship. I was jest like an errand boy would be on shore. Things went along all right but about two days from San Francisco, I noticed sunthin' that I thought was peculiar. Whenever I went into the galley to take a message to the cook. one or two of our passengers would be in there and when I hove in sight they'd stop talkin'. I wouldn't er thought nothin' of it if it had happened once or twice but it seemed to me like a regerler thing. Every time I went there, the same fellers would be buzzin' the cook, confidential like. I see the same two or three fellers hobnobbin' with the steward a number of times. They acted jest as though they was plannin' sunthin' that they didn't want folks to know about. Boy like I smelled mutiny, murder and all kinds of things that I'd read about. I didn't say anything to Uncle Andrew for fear he'd laff at me, and, at the same time, I guess I wanted to play detective myself.

"I watched my chances and when I see the

cook leave the galley and come out on deck, I slipped down into his quarters mighty quick. I had it all planned and with my heart poundin', I crawled under a pile of gunny sacks in one corner of the galley and waited. I was goin' to be a hero, if it was a possible thing," chuckled the old man.

"How I wished I had a revolver; lucky thing for me I didn't have. I rehearsed, to myself, how I'd jump out and p'int the gun at the rascals when I heard how they was goin' to kill all hands. It warn't very comfortable, curled up under the dusty sacks, and I purty nigh crawled out and gin up the job, but jest as I made up my mind not to play detective after all, I heard somebuddy comin'.

"Cook come in fust, and two other fellers follered him, and begun to talk. In a minute I see, or ruther heard, that there was sunthin' in the wind all right. I listened hard, for they was talkin' low. Jest then the dust begun to make me want to sneeze the wust way. Jimminetty! how my nose did itch! I grabbed holt of it, and jest held back that sneeze by main strength. Then I begun to

itch in other places, and then all over. If I made a noise, I figgered I was a goner. I trembled so I was 'fraid they'd see the sacks wiggle.

"It seems the cook and the steward had caught the gold fever purty bad, and had agreed with these two fellers and three more, to steal the bulk of our provender and tools, and in some way git the stuff into small boats at jest about the right time. They aimed to overpower Uncle Andrew and the mates, and after that they reckoned 'twould be clear sailin' for 'em to git away with the stores. They'd be purty well fixed for gold huntin' with all those supplies.

"'We've got plenty of shootin' irons,' I heard one of 'em say, 'and we won't be afraid to use 'em if we have to.'

"That made me feel all the scairter. My teeth chattered and I shook, I tell ye. I hung onto my nose and tried the best I could to keep still, but I didn't see why they couldn't all hear my heart poundin'.

"They gut everything arranged with the cook, jest what he was to do. Each one of

'em was to look after one of the officers of the ship when the time come to lower boats and

git away with the stuff.

"It seemed as though they would never git through talkin' and leave. I'd found out all about the plot and I was anxious as a colt to be out of there. I was all cramped up with bein' still so long and my nose was achin', I'd gripped it so hard. Jest then one of the fellers by the name of Atkins says:

"'Lemme have some of them gunny sacks

to put some of my dunnage in.'

"'Jimminetty,' I thought, 'now I'm a goner.'

"I gut my legs under me all ready to spring to my feet and run. Through a hole in the bag, I see him p'int my way.

"'Them's fuller holes,' says the cook. 'Git some duffle bags from the steward. They'll

do better.'

"My, warn't I relieved. I wanted 'em to git off of the subject of gunny sacks, I tell ye," laughed Uncle Seth.

"'Guess we'd better dust out er here,' says the other one by the name of Simson. 'That

cabin boy or somebuddy might come in and

suspicion something.'

"I was purty glad to see 'em go. Now the cook begun to git the beans ready to bake and was purty nigh the door. Just then some-buddy whistled soft like outside and the cook answered and went out.

"For a while I darsen't leave, for he might be jest outside. I couldn't hear nothin' so I thought I'd risk it. I crept out from under the dirty sacks, too stiff to hardly move and edged towards the door. I peeked out and didn't see no signs of the cook. The roof of the galley was raised from the deck and the door was on the forrud end. To git aft I'd have to go out the door and round the outside of the galley (cook house). If I run into the cook I had no doubt he'd know I was up to somethin' and like as not clout me over the head and throw me overboard. He was a big half breed, and a huge scar down his cheek gave him a piratical look and I'd allus been a leetle afraid of him. My month on the sea had toughened me considerbul and I was a good sized boy for my age but I knew I

wouldn't be a mouthful for that Portuguese, Spaniard or whatever he was.

"I dodged around the galley on the run and bang! I run straight into him amidship and struck my shoulder jest below his waistline. He yelled, I s'pose I startled him, I know I was more than startled, and grabbed for me, but he was a leetle off his balance from the jolt I'd give him and he ketched my jacket.

"I squirmed and pulled and it all happened so sudden, he didn't have a chance to git a better holt, so I slipped right out of my jacket and left him holdin' it. I legged it aft in a hurry. I found Uncle Andrew and rushin' up to him, I gasped 'Mutiny.' I managed to make him understand and told him about the men.

"Uncle Andrew looked mighty white and mighty mad. I tell ye, I was most as scairt of him, when he looked like that, as I had been of the galley gang. He called for the fust and second mates in a hurry: give 'em their orders, buckled on his pistols and started foward.

"'Keep out the fuss, Seth,' he says to me.

'I don't want you to git hurt.'

"Bless ye, keepin' out of the way was jest what I didn't want to do. I picked up a belayin' pin and follered. There was considerbul noise in the direction of the crew's quarters, so I judged the cook had spread the news that I had yelled 'Mutiny' to the old man.

"Uncle Andrew never stopped to look right nor left. He went by the galley and jest then I see the cook come out the door, lookin' ugly with a butcher knife in his hand. I tried to warn the old man, but my throat was dry as a husk and I couldn't make a sound.

"Jest as he started to make a lunge at Uncle Andrew, I hove that belayin' pin straight at him for all I was wuth.

"Bing! it caught him jest above his ear, and down he went, all in a heap. Uncle Andrew turned when he heard the cook fall.

"'Who done that?' he says.

"'I did,' I chattered.

"'Wal, truss him up quick and leave him there,' never sayin' a word about my not obeyin' orders and keepin' aft.

"I cal'late I put enough rope around that feller to tie a schooner, and then lit out forrud to see what I could do to help. When I gut up there the mates had Simson and Atkins in irons all ready to throw 'em down in the lazaret. I had heard some pistol shots and jest then I see Uncle Andrew git a bead on one of the mutineers who had a gun. The feller dropped the gun as the old man's bullet shattered his forearm. Two or three more of the passengers laid out on the deck, groanin'. The rest of the crowd was plum subdued. They was huddled together way up in the bow, where the second mate had 'em covered. Some of 'em was guilty and some was innocent but the officers hadn't time to sort 'em out."

"My, but you saved your Uncle Andrew quite a lot, besides saving his own life with the belaying pin, didn't you?" said Sam, his eyes shining.

"I s'pose I did. It didn't go off jest as I would liked to have had it. Afterwards I used to think how, if I could have had a pistol, I would have flourished it some, and really wound up the thing a leetle more ship-shape, but I guess it done well enough."

"I think you did a great job, Uncle Seth. I'll bet your Uncle Andrew was grateful and

proud of you."

"I believe Uncle Andrew did say sunthin' about it bein' lucky that I overheard the plans, but he warn't given much to palaver, Uncle Andrew warn't."

"What did he do with the mutineers, when he got to San Francisco?" questioned Sam.

"Jest sent 'em ashore and turned 'em loose."

"Turned them loose? Didn't he have them arrested?" asked Sam, astonished.

"Oh, no, it would have been a bother and he wanted to git on with his voyage. There warn't much law and order in Californy in them days. Folks made their own laws as they needed 'em."

"That was a good story, Uncle Seth," said

Sam with a sigh.

"Sho, it ain't much of a story, I reckon, but sech as it is, you're welcome to it. I hear the supper bell, Sam. It's time to h'ist the jib and pull up the anchor."

## CHAPTER IV

#### SAM GOES CRABBING

SAW two men over at the bridge the other day fishing for crabs with a line and bait," remarked Sam the next morning, as they were walking toward the shore with their crab nets over their shoulders.

"Some folks do," replied Uncle Seth, "but I allus like to give the crab a chance. Throwin' over a piece of meat on a line ain't givin' him much show, for the silly crab don't seem to 'have the sense he was born with,' as old Grandma Bascom used to say, and he don't know enough to leggo that meat, and he's hauled aboard."

When they had beaten up the "Narrers" with the skiff in tow, Uncle Seth ran the Cynthia B. into a shallow bay where they were to do their fishing, or rather netting, and Sam dropped the anchor. After loading their

nets into the skiff, Uncle Seth took the oars, stationed Sam in the stern and began to push the boat, stern first, slowly along the shore.

"You know, Sam, these here crabs are like a lot of people you and I know—their appearance is deceitful. You'd think, to see one of 'em lazin' along on the bottom, that he ain't quick enough to git out of his own way. Sech clumsy lookin' critters I never see, but you startle him and, Jimminetty! how he can sashay. He can ladies change, forrud and back and grand right and left, afore you can hardly wink."

Sam was standing in the stern eagerly scanning the shallow water with net poised and ready.

"When you see a blue claw on the bottom feedin', jest say the word and I'll slow up," said Uncle Seth. "When you start to scoop 'em, you'll have to be lively about it, for they can run like time, lemme tell ye."

Presently, Sam gave the signal to slow up. He made a wild scoop with the net, but when he pulled in, all he had in his net was mud.

"Lost him, didn't you, Sam?" chuckled Seth.

"Yes, I did, but he went backward, and I had no idea he could move so fast," said Sam, much ashamed at having one of those gro-

tesque creatures get away from him.

"They do sartin sashay smart, don't they? You'll lose a lot 'fore you git onto the way to head 'em off. Hold your net purty nigh the water and when you jab, jab short and quick. It was some time 'fore I could git the hang of it," the old man comforted.

Sam lost several more but at last he "begun to git the notion," as Uncle Seth said, and lost fewer. What creeping creatures they were! Their claws snapped viciously as they crawled

over the bottom of the boat.

Uncle Seth praised his work and Sam warmed to the sport as he became more used to handling the long pole. It was sport, too, and Sam agreed with his companion that the crabs "could beat to wind'ard jest as lively as they went 'fore the wind."

"Here, Uncle Seth," he said after he had landed ten or a dozen, "you try it a while now and let me row."

How different this spirit of Sam's was than it would have been a month ago. Then, if he was enjoying something, he would never have thought of yielding so some one else could have a share in the sport. His stay with Uncle Seth had taught him many things, and the queer part of it all was, that Uncle Seth had never scolded him or pointed out his shortcomings. By some anecdote about a "feller down on the Cape," the old Captain taught him without seeming to.

During the second week of his stay Sam had wished to go outside the harbor on a day that Uncle Seth thought too choppy for them to beat back and arrive home in time for dinner.

"Don't like to keep the women folks waitin' meals, if I can help it. They have enough to do gittin' the victuals, without our keepin' 'em waitin', and we sure would have a slow time beatin' back ag'in this tide and wind."

Thereupon Sam grew sulky, but it didn't work with the old man. He kept up a friendly sort of conversation to which the boy answered but shortly. When they came to the mooring, Sam did not run forward with the boat hook and pick up the buoy as had become his habit. Uncle Seth didn't say a word

but sailed past the buoy, came about a second time and he, himself, ran forward and picked up the mooring.

Of course Sam felt cheap and mean. He knew that he was in the wrong, and this made

him sulkier than ever.

The next day Uncle Seth went off sailing in the Cynthia B. to carry some newspapers to the men on board the lightship, anchored on the Handkerchief shoals. He said nothing to Sam about going along, and the boy was bitterly disappointed, for he wished very much to visit a lightship. Uncle Seth had told him how the men were on the lightship for months without coming ashore. It was Uncle Seth's custom to go out every few weeks and carry papers and magazines for the crew.

Sam had spent an unpleasant morning. When the Cynthia B. came to her mooring just before noon, Sam was on the shore to meet Uncle Seth. He had a duty to perform and he knew it, but it was hard, mighty hard. He had to make it right with the old Captain.

"Hello, Sam," greeted Uncle Seth affably, as he stepped on the shore from the skiff.

"Hello, Uncle Seth," replied Sam. "I'm

awfully sorry I was disagreeable yesterday and I'll take care it doesn't happen again," he finished with a gulp of embarrassment.

Uncle Seth grasped the boy by the hand and slapped him on the back delightedly.

"That's all right, Sammy boy. I mighty feared you wouldn't come up to the scratch, but ye did and I'm proud of ye. There can't be no mutiny aboard this craft, son. It's a powerful hard thing for a feller to admit he was in the wrong, but he feels a heap better to git it off his chest. We'll fergit it and start all over ag'in."

Sam didn't forget it, as Uncle Seth suggested, but evidently Uncle Seth did, for he never mentioned it afterward.

The old Captain now took a hand at crabbing. He, too, was successful and soon the bottom of the row boat was covered with the crawling gnashing blue claws.

"They ain't harnsome," remarked Uncle Seth, "but they're purty fair eatin', betterin' lobster, some think. We struck 'em jest the right tide, for when the water gits a leetle mite higher they go up in the grass, and you can't git 'em nohow."

"How do we get them out of the boat?" asked Sam, rather nervous at the prospect of handling such dangerous looking fellows.

Uncle Seth showed him how to grasp them so that their snapping would do no harm. During the ride home, Sam practiced on the crabs until he overcame his fear of picking them up.

"What a lot of things there are to do down here for fun," exclaimed Sam, as they walked toward the house and one of Aunt Cynthia's bountiful dinners

## CHAPTER V

### THE TUSSLE WITH A SPERM WHALE

"S AM is gittin' to be quite a dabster at sailin' the Cynthia B., ain't he, Mr. Hotchkiss?" asked Uncle Seth of Sam's father.

"I should say so," earnestly assented Mr. Hotchkiss.

Sam was at the wheel, and, under the eye of Captain Seth, was handling the little boat as one born of the salt sea. The Cynthia B. heeled gently as her skipper kept her nose well up to the light steady breeze. He headed her for the outer harbor, straight across the flats, for the high tide made these shoals safe for such craft as the Cynthia B.

"What's that land we can see in the distance?" asked Sam's father.

"That's Marthy's Vineyard," answered the Captain. "See her purty plain to-day."

"What direction is Nantucket?" Mr. Hotchkiss then asked. "We have some friends stopping there."

"Nantucket is about over here," pointed

out Uncle Seth.

"You used to sail from Nantucket, didn't you, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam.

"Yes, I sailed from Nantucket after the fust two voyages. Nantucket was a great whalin' port in them days," the old Captain said. "The only reason that New Bedford ever cut in ahead of her was the long bar that run across the mouth of her harbor. There was never more'n ten feet of water over this sand and when they begun to go whalin' in big vessels 'twas mighty hard for 'em to git in er out over it. They built their own vessels at Nantucket from timber grown on the island, that is, as long as the timber lasted. They made their own rope, coopered their own oil barrels and one of their big industries was the makin' of spermaceti candles. It was a hustlin' kind of a place."

"I think you must have had some rather exciting times capturing whales, Uncle Seth," said Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Sometimes we did, and that's a fact," agreed the Captain. "Whalin' voyages as a whole was about the same story. If you went on one, you went on the whole of 'em. Course there was once in a while a leetle variety. I s'pose you'd call some of the times we had excitin'. Sometimes a whale would be a hit more savage than usual and then we'd have to work spry."

"Did a whale ever turn and attack the boat?" asked Sam.

"They sartin did," declared Uncle Seth; "sperm whales in particerler. When a sperm whale turns on a whale boat there's mighty lively goin's on, I tell ye. You see, a sperm whale's gut teeth in his lower jaw; plenty of 'em and mighty big ones they are, too. A right whale and a bow head ain't gut nary a toot, but of course they can do considerable damage with their flukes, even without teeth, and then ag'in they sometimes ram a boat head on. But the sperm whale is what the whalemen don't like to see comin' at 'em with his mouth wide open and all them teeth showin': it ain't pleasant.

"I remember one time when I was fust mate

with Uncle Andrew," began the old man. "Let's see, I guess it was my third or fourth voyage with him. I was quite a husky young feller by that time; my fust voyage had been the makin' of me. Mother cried, I know, when I gut home from that fust voyage, I looked so stocky. Funny how women will do. Wal, on this fourth voyage, we was off the northern coast of New Zealand lookin' for sperm whales."

"If I remember my geography correctly, New Zealand is in the southern latitudes. Is that where you hunted sperm whales?" asked Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Yes, sperm whales range about forty-five degrees north and forty-five degrees south of the Equator," said Uncle Seth. "Right whales and bow heads are further north.

"At daylight, one mornin'," he continued, "the lookout yelled and we all tumbled out to find that we was right in the middle of a school. They proved to be a school of young males, 'Sixty barrel bulls,' the whalemen called 'em. They was young whales that the old bulls had driv out of the herd; bein' young, they was full of fight and mighty dangerous fellers to run up with.

"It was blowin' half a gale, and the sea was so rough that it was a question whether we could lower a boat or not, but we was after oil and the only way to git oil is to git whales," he chuckled.

"Uncle Andrew was boatsteerer in the boat I was in. He allus liked to go along in the boat, though some cap'ns didn't, and do the harpoonin',"—

"But, Uncle Seth, you said he was boatsteerer," interrupted Sam. "How could he steer the boat in the stern, if he was harpooner in the bow?"

"Wal, that is funny, but the fact of the case is, the boatsteerer ain't boatsteerer 'til after the whale's struck and then he jumps back aft and takes the tiller," Uncle Seth explained. "Purty soon after we cleared ship Uncle Andrew struck. He only gut one iron into the whale. There's two harpoons and the boatsteerer is s'posed to strike with both of 'em but sometimes it can't be done. The fust iron is hitched to the end of the line, which is

coiled in a bucket and paid out or drawn in, as you'd play a fish. This line runs aft and has a turn around a loggerhead, or wooden stub stickin' up in the stern. The second iron is fastened to a short warp. This warp has a bowline on it through which the main line passes. If the fust iron pulls out, why, you gut him by the second iron, you see.

"There was sech a sea that when we struck, the boat gut half full of water. I was tendin' line, so I dropped off a hundred fathom to give myself time to bail and be ship-shape for the fight that I was purty sure was comin'.

"I was right about the fight part of it. I expected the whale to run, but instid of that the tarnation critter kept right still and stood on his tail, as we say ,with his head and a part of his body stickin' out of water. He'd turn lookin' this way and that to see what was causin' him all this trouble. We pulled up to within ten fathom, gut the second iron in the crotch: lance ready, everybody on his oars and waited for action.

"Wal, action! Jimminetty, we didn't have to wait long for it," drawled the Captain. "Purty soon we got it a-plenty. That feller gut his eye on our boat and without stoppin' to holler, 'Look out,' he come. Yes, suhree, he did. He jest rushed straight for us with that mouth of his opened up wide, like the hind end of a meat cart, only bigger.

"If it had been smooth, I figger we might have dodged him and mebbe killed him as he passed, but it warn't smooth by a jug full. I didn't have no keen desire to play Jonah to that whale. The way he was lookin', I kinder gut the notion he warn't reliable, and might not spit me out on dry land, as he was supposed to do," chuckled the old man, "so I jest natcherly jumped overboard along with everybuddy else.

"We warn't a minute too soon, neither. He snapped his jaws together on that boat, cuttin' it in two pieces, rolled over on his side, smashin' one half with his head and throwin' t'other half high in the air with his jaw. He made kindlin' wood of that whale boat purty quick, I can tell ye.

"During the mix up, I was throwed this way and that: sometimes with my head out of water and sometimes with it under. All of a sudden, I felt sunthin' round my feet and legs. And when I found out what it was, I tell ye I had kind of an all gone feelin', for 'twas the harpoon line with t'other end fast to that whale. If the critter started to sound or run, things wouldn't be real pleasant for me: I'd have a ride or my legs would be cut off by that line.

"I doubled up and tugged and tugged at the snarl of line, expectin' every minute to feel it grow taut and begin to pull me along. I cal'late I grew hot and cold by turns. It seemed as if I never could find the right place to begin to ontangle. I didn't have no knife handy, and if I had, I doubt if I could have done much with it. I'd git a breath and then duck, double up and struggle with that line. The whale all this time was millin' round a little and floppin' considerbul, but he didn't go fur enough to fetch the line taut. He was purty nigh me: too nigh for comfort, but I darsn't try to git out of the way, for if he felt a pull on that harpoon he'd sure begin to cut up.

"I was gittin' so tired with my squirmin' and wrigglin' that I had to work slower and that was the savin' of me, for when I stopped

strugglin' so hard, the thing loosened up a little. I come up to git another breath and the whale was raisin' his tail and plankin' it down on the water: gittin' mighty uneasy, I reckoned. I went at it again, and when I finally gut my feet and legs free I hardly had enough strength to keep afloat.

"I tred water a spell to git my bearin's, and looked around to see what was goin' on with t'other fellers. This was the fust chance I'd had, for I'd been too busy with my private affairs, as you might say, to notice how they was farin'. I see 'em clingin' to parts of the wreck, oars and one thing anuther, so I judged they was all right. Jest then I happened to look 'round and I guess I must have drifted nigher to that whale than I thought I was. There he was right near to me with his flukes raised in the air over my head and ready to come down. I didn't have time to do nothin', not even to duck under water, 'fore they come down, smack! I suppose they didn't come within six foot of me, but I would have sworn at the time that a quarter of an inch was the distance," he laughed.

"As it was, the wash buried me, head, neck

and ears, in the bloody sea water. I thought my time had come now for sartin, but I kicked out of there with all the strength I had left, and the next thing I knew sunthin' grabbed me, and I was hauled aboard the larboard boat that I hadn't seen at all. I was sick as a hoss from swallerin' so much water and blood."

"I guess you were pretty glad to get back to the ship," said Sam.

"Why, bless your heart, we didn't go back to the ship—not then," said Uncle Seth, with wonder in his eyes that Sam should think such a thing. "We went and killed that whale."

## CHAPTER VI

### SAM IS PROMOTED

bake," remarked Uncle Seth. "I have to have one once in so often, or I git uneasy. I reckon it's the same way with me and clambakes as it is with a man that smokes terbaccer: if he don't smoke about so often, he gits peevish. Don't know as it makes me peevish to go without a clambake, howsomever, I do git to hankerin'. Suppose you've been on clambake parties, ain't ye, Mr. Hotchkiss?"

"Not since I was a small boy, and I can't remember much about them," replied Sam's

father.

"Sam and I will git the things together this afternoon, and to-morrow mornin' we'd like you and all hands join us in a real sportin' event."

"We shall be very glad to go, I am sure.

I'd like to help this afternoon, too, if I may."
"Sure you can. I reckon Sam, the fust
mate, here, will be willin' to ship you as a
green hand, promotion to come regerler."

Sam, his eyes sparkling, agreed, greatly en-

joying Uncle Seth's good-natured banter.

They went on board the Cynthia B., and Mr. Hotchkiss was secretly much pleased that Sam seemed so anxious for his company. A short sail brought them to the beach. They had provided themselves with wooden buckets and clam hoes, removed their shoes and stockings, and Uncle Seth gave instructions for sounding for clams and hunting for their holes in the sand.

Both father and son began to hustle, each to fill his bucket before the other. They laughed when clams squirted sea water in their eyes, as they bent looking for the most propitious places to dig. Uncle Seth watched the two and grinned comfortably to himself.

"Look at this big fellow, Sam," called Mr.

Hotchkiss, holding up a prize clam.

"But see my big one," countered his son, noticing that his father called him Sam, instead of the usual Samuel.

"Gee, Dad is a regular feller," thought the boy.

After they had filled their buckets, they rinsed the clams in clear sea water and loaded them into the boat.

In their absence, Aunt Cynthia had been preparing her part of the next day's eatables. She had been baking and frying, and packing dishes in the baskets. When Sam came into the kitchen, lo and behold! there was his mother, wearing one of Aunt Cynthia's aprons, her face flushed, and yes, Sam looked again to make sure, her face was streaked with flour.

Seeing his mother, who never stepped into the kitchen at home, except to give some order, thus in the midst of things, made Sam feel so happy, somehow, that he hugged and kissed her, flour and all. The pleased look on his mother's face, at this unusual outburst of affection, caused a warm and comfortable feeling within him.

Uncle Seth had been busy since early morning, making trips to the shore with a wheel-barrow filled with the various materials that

he said were very necessary for the success of a clambake.

After breakfast, with the dishes washed and the house set to rights, "Aunt Cynthia" said she was ready. Wearing a huge sun hat, and a clean gingham apron over her likewise crisp cotton dress, she locked the door, placed the key under the mat, and joined the others as they started out.

"Here, Sam," called Uncle Seth, when they had pulled the anchor, "I hereby promote you from fust mate to captain of this craft. Take the tiller and sail her. I want ver Pa and Ma to see what kind of a skipper you

are."

"Oh, Samuel," exclaimed his mother, "I really think you'd better ask Captain Nickerson to sail the boat. I am afraid you wouldn't know how to steer."

"Now, Marm, Sam knows how purty well, and, as fer shoals and sech, he's been with me so many times, he knows the harbor like a book. It's all right for him to sail her or I wouldn't allow him to myself."

"Sure, let him do it," urged Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Uncle Seth knows, and I want Sam to begin to do things and have some responsibility. He has spent days and days on the water this summer. You don't realize what a chance he's had to learn from Captain Nickerson. I am mighty grateful to him for all the instruction that Sam has received."

"Oh, yes, of course we are grateful. He is having a wonderful summer with Captain Nickerson, aren't you, Samuel?"

"You bet," agreed Sam.

"If you are quite sure, Captain, that it is all right for Samuel to sail the boat, and he can do it safely——"

"Sam can do it safe enough, Mrs. Hotch-kiss. I've tried him out."

Sam guided the little craft skillfully in and out among the boats moored near her, and his performance brought commendation from his father.

"Well done, son, you did that very neatly."

Sam glowed with pleasure at his father's praise, and started on his first tack. He held her up into the wind, just enough for the sail to fill well, and, with a good breeze, the

Cynthia B. seemed to exult with Sam in the delightful sport, as she sped across the harbor.

"Sails her purty well, don't he, Mr. Hotch-

kiss?" said Uncle Seth in a low voice.

"He certainly does, Uncle Seth, and it gives me as much satisfaction as it evidently does him," replied Sam's father.

"All ashore that's going ashore," cried Sam.

The real preparation for the clambake now began. Sam and his father were the helpers, and, under the direction of Uncle Seth, gathered rocks and seaweed.

"Fust we'll start the fire," said Uncle Seth.
"Why, we've just had breakfast, surely you
don't begin to feel like lunch yet, Captain
Nickerson," said Mrs. Hotchkiss, laughingly.

"The preparations will take some time, Mrs. Hotchkiss. This ain't like gittin' an ordinary

meal er victuals."

The fire was burning nicely and Uncle Seth piled driftwood upon it until it was of sufficient size and heat to suit him. He then placed the stones, large and small, that had been gathered, in the midst of the fire. All this was an old story to Aunt Cynthia, but to the others, it was something altogether

new and brought forth all sorts of questions.

When the rocks were snapping hot, they were covered to a depth of several inches with seaweed. The wet mass soon began to steam and give off a pleasant odor. In this warm steaming seaweed Uncle Seth and the helpers placed clams, oysters, ears of corn, potatoes, onions and eggs. A large canvas was spread under an old scrub pine. Paper plates were laid upon the canvas and the baskets full of Aunt Cynthia's wholesome cooking were placed near at hand.

The two men with Sam went around the point and presently came forth in bathing suits and swam and frolicked about in the clear blue water of the little cove.

Aunt Cynthia ran true to form, according to Uncle Seth, and fell fast asleep with her back to a tree trunk and her sun hat pulled over her eyes, while Mrs. Hotchkiss read and watched the men enjoying their dip.

After what seemed like a very long time to Sam, Uncle Seth declared it was time to open the bake.

Oh, the wonderful odors, the smells that came from that pile of seaweed when it was

opened! Out came the clams, and out came the oysters gaping open and well done. To those who have had the rare privilege of eating food cooked in just this way, will come the realization of how good everything tasted to one hungry boy in particular. The others, too, showed their appreciation. The oysters, taken from the water this very morning and steamed in the fragrant bake, with a dab of butter on each one, eaten from the shell, were delicacies with which the Boston family was unacquainted.

"You needn't be afraid of these oysters of Cape Cod, fresh from the water. I cal'late they are made to eat. I tried some oysters in New York once but I don't like the way they dish 'em up over there. 'Twas at a dinner at my nephew's house: one of them installment plan dinners, you know, where they have a little bit at a time. I'd git to goin' good on one course and then a feller'd come along and I'd have to bring her 'round on another tack and shift my course. When it comes to eatin', I'd ruther sail 'fore the wind with all the canvas she'll carry. This beatin'

to wind'ard at the dinner table don't suit me wuth a cent.

"Wal, I eat some oysters among other things, that is, they looked like oysters, when they fust brought 'em on. I see folks puttin' ketchup and one thing anuther on 'em. I judged 'twas the fashion and I ought to be in style, so I done the same.

"A woman right next to me says, 'Aren't these oysters delicious, Captain Nickerson'?

"'Well, Marm,' says I, 'mebbe they be, but after I've put on all these decorations, about all I can taste is pepper sass and hoss reddish. If anybody don't like the taste of good shell fish, this must be a fust class way to eat 'em.'

"She laughed real hearty and allowed sunthin' about my bein' rich, which I ain't, but I let it go."

"Seth Nickerson," spoke up Aunt Cynthia, "you're always tryin', with your everlastin' foolin', to make folks think you're an awful fool. Now, Mrs. Hotchkiss, he was jest tryin' to say sunthin' funny to that lady. He can be real well behaved in company, when he's a mind to."

"Thank ye, Ma," said Uncle Seth, his eyes twinkling; "you allus give me a good recommendation. 'Course I was bein' pleasant to the lady and she seemed to enjoy it. 'Fore the dinner was over she was askin' me questions about Cape Cod and all its quaint people, as she called us.

"Says I, 'Marm, accordin' to Noah Webster, quaint means old-fashioned or curious. Well, mebbe you're right, but we ain't a circumstance to the curious people there is in New York. No, suh.'"

"You warn't very perlite to her, Pa," remonstrated Aunt Cynthia.

"She warn't very perlite to the folks of Cape Cod," replied Uncle Seth, seriously, "jest because we don't turn night into day and prefer to bring up children instid er poodle dogs and a few other things. She didn't have no call to make fun of us."

"You're right, Captain," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "dead right. I've found the people of Cape Cod to be most wholesome and sincere."

"We're much obliged to hear ye say so, Mr. Hotchkiss. P'raps we ain't all of us jest as

you say, but in the bulk, folks down here is purty reliable."

Sam sailed the boat home, and even his mother admitted that he was a safe skipper. He had passed through his apprenticeship and now held his First Officer's papers.

# CHAPTER VII

### SAM OUTWITS UNCLE SETH'S ENEMY

Emery is watching you from the wharf and he'll cord ye, when we git in, if ye leave it like that. There, that's better."

Uncle Seth was passenger, as he was most of the time nowadays when they were sailing, for his pupil had improved rapidly. The old Captain had tried him in light breezes at first, and gradually in heavier weather, until he felt Sam was capable of handling the Cynthia B. in any wind, short of a storm. He was as proud of his pupil's work as Sam himself.

"Head her up into the narrers," said Uncle Seth. "I want to see how them seed oysters of mine are gittin' along. I planted seven hundred bushel on my grant last fall, and that tarnation dredge boat come along and hitched her scow with a long warp. The wind come 'round to the suth'ard, and that warp dragged all over my grant. I guess likely it buried most all those young oysters in the mud. Warn't a might a need of his hitchin' like that. He was just one of those little fellers with gold braid on his cap and that gold braid struck in and made his head swell up purty big," said the old Captain bitterly.

"I went aboard and tried to git him to shift his boat, but as I say, his gold braid had struck in and affected his head, so he jest laffed and said his berth suited him all right and he was too busy to shift. A leetle authority makes some fellers puff up purty bad. If I'd had a hand like that on one er my vessels, I'd

chucked him down in the lazaret.

"I happened to know one of the board up to Boston purty well and I gut him on the telephone and told him the story. He telegraphed this feller Sampson to move out of there right away, or he'd have him in on the carpet. The feller knew which side his bread was buttered on so he moved out, but he dragged that warp, which was heavy, all around over my oyster bed while he was gittin' out. He was purty

mad at me and I guess he done that a purpose. "That friend of mine has gone down to Cuba on some business, goin' to be gone a year or two, and I've been expectin' this feller would hear of it and try some more funny business. He didn't quite ruin 'em so I s'pose he may try again. There ain't a thing I can do about it. If I went to law about it, it would take lots of time and money. I have appealed to our harbor master, but he says he can't do nothin', so there I be. I hear that they've gut through dredgin' the channel into the outer harbor to-day and they're goin' back to Boston or some other place, so mebbe I'm safe."

They found by raking about that the oysters were not all destroyed, and, as the Captain wished to catch the afternoon train for Provincetown, where he was to attend a meeting of some kind the next day, Sam sailed back to the mooring.

Sam was indignant that any one could be so mean as the Captain of the dredge boat, and the more he thought about it, the greater was his anger against this official who would destroy property just for the sake of causing Uncle Seth discomfort.

That evening, as Sam was coming from the Post Office, he became interested in the conversation of two men walking in front of him. It was dark so he could not see their faces, but he caught the glint of gold on the cap of the larger of the two men. With Uncle Seth's story fresh in his mind, he listened closely to what they were saying, for he heard one say something about the "Cow Pasture." Sam knew that the cow pasture was a small circular cove off the narrows, where Uncle Seth had his oyster grant. Sam edged closer to the two men.

"Well, to-morrow we'll be out of here," said the smaller man.

"Not till I run up to the cow pasture and have a little fun with the old man," said the larger.

"You'll get into trouble if you do anything up there. You know last fall Barrows came near getting you, for sweeping those oysters with your cable."

"I don't give a cuss for Barrows. He's in

Cuba, anyway, and I owe this old mossback a dig for reportin' me to Barrows. If he'd minded his own business, I'd have let him alone."

"You'll get in bad, you mind what I tell you."

"Who's Cap'n of this crew, you or me?"
"Oh, you're Cap'n, of course, and you can
do what you want to but I'm just tellin' you."

Sam was trembling with anger. So they were going to harm Uncle Seth's grant further. What could he do? Appeal to the harbor master would do no good; Uncle Seth had tried that. His father would know no more than he how to deal with this worse-than-thief of a dredging captain. If he told Aunt Cynthia she would just worry. If Uncle Seth was here, he might think of something, but he wasn't, and he didn't know where he was stopping at Provincetown.

Thoughts ran through Sam's head like chain lightning. He must do something. As he went by the hotel with its brilliantly lighted

piazza, some one shouted:

"Hello, Sam, what's your hurry?"

It was Frank Stanford, a young fellow two

or three years older than Sam with whom he had sailed on one or two occasions.

"You act nervous, what's the matter, Sam?"

"I am nervous, Frank." Then he told Frank the whole story. His friend was as eager to do something to save the oysters as Sam, for he, too, knew Uncle Seth and liked him immensely.

"Look here, Frank, I've got a plan. I don't know whether we can work it or not, but see what you think."

"You wait a minute. Let's have my dad in on this. He'll help us, I know, and he will know a trick or two, perhaps."

Presently Sam was shaking hands with Frank's father, a young man, Sam thought, to have a son as old as Frank. He recited again the details and told what his plan was for heading off the dredgers.

"Bully," cried Frank's father. "I'll bring a gun along, too. That may help. Frank, you get as many other fellows who have sail boats as you can and we'll be on hand early in the morning."

Just as the sun was breaking the next morning, Sam hustled into his clothes and drew on

a heavy sweater, for it was cool. He grabbed a lunch, which Aunt Cynthia had prepared for him, from the kitchen table, as he had told the family he was going out early in the sail boat. When he reached the shore, there was Frank with a crowd of a dozen or fifteen young fellows, each one either in a sail boat or about to put up sail. Fifteen sail boats and more than as many boys. Frank's father was there enjoying himself hugely.

"Come on, boys," called Mr. Stanford. "Let's set the stage, for the show may begin

any minute."

The catboats quickly got under way and headed for the "cow pasture," each boy coached for his part.

At about the same time the engineer, on board the government tug boat at the mouth of the outer harbor, had steam up according to orders.

"Cast off," said the captain of the tug and, without a single hoot from her whistle, the tug puffed away from the heavy dredger. Upon her deck was a long chain piled in a heap.

"When we hitch a long loop of that chain

on astern and steam 'round the cow pasture two or three times with the chain sweepin', I'd be willin' to gamble we'll make hash of sunthin'." It was the captain of the dredger speaking. The three or four young fellows aboard the tug laughed in great glee at the prospect.

"Cap is pretty sore on the old party, ain't he?" said one of the crew, spitting tobacco

juice joyfully.

"Sure, I don't blame him either. These old guys down here think they own the earth. Cap'll give him his for tryin' to put him in wrong with the main squeeze."

When the tug puffed quietly up the narrows and turned a point, the captain and crew, gathered forward, saw a strange sight. Across the opening of the little cow pasture or cove were fifteen catboats strung out with hardly space between for a rowboat to pass, let alone the tug or one of its big lifeboats. The boys enjoyed the looks of astonishment on the faces of those aboard the tug.

"We want to git in there, you're obstructin' navigation," velled the captain.

No one of the occupants of the small boats

said a word. The white sails flapped and fluttered as the crafts kept on in slow procession.

"Make way, I say, we want to git in there," he yelled once more. "If you don't give me room, I'll run you down."

"Let's see you try running us down, Cap'n

Kidd," shouted Frank.

"We're sailing craft, we've got the right of way."

A short consultation followed on board the tug.

"We can make those kids get outer the way,

Cap," said one.

"Steam craft has to give way to sailin' boats, you numb head," answered the captain, "but I think we can lower a boat and shove through. Git the chains ready. They won't dare try to stop us and we can push by with our heavy lifeboat."

They lowered the boat and threw overboard the heavy chain with its two ends fast to the stern of the rugged lifeboat.

The boats at the opening of the cove strung out, and presented a solid front of defense, determined to hold their ground as long as they could. The long boat dragging the heavy chain started toward the lighter sailing fleet.

"That will be about far enough for you to come," said Mr. Stanford, standing in the boat with Frank at the tiller, and holding a very businesslike revolver in his hand.

The men rowing began to back water.

"What have you gut to say about where we go?" cried the cap'n of the tug. "Ain't this free harbor? I'll warn ye, there'll be sunthin' goin' on if you meddle with us. Go ahead, fellers."

"I'll warn you, Mr. Man," replied Frank's father slowly, "that if you pull another stroke I'll let some water in your boat and plenty of it. I happen to be deputy sheriff in this county and destroying a man's oysters will keep you fellows picking rocks for some time."

Sam looked at Mr. Stanford in astonishment, as he saw him spread open his coat and display his badge. Sam had no idea that Frank's father was an officer. "Wasn't that fortunate, though," thought Sam.

The men in the lifeboat didn't like the looks of the gun or the badge; despite the captain's growls about their not having any sand, they rather demurred at going up against a deputy sheriff.

"I tell ye we ain't done nothin'. He can't keep us out of that cove," expostulated the

captain.

"He's a sheriff, ain't he?" asked one of the men. "He can arrest us and make a mess even if we ain't done nothin'. Mebbe take a week or two to straighten it out. You can't tell what these here hick judges will do."

"Wal, all right, we'll put back, but you're a bunch of yeller ones, is all I can say."

They pulled back to the tug, and, shouting curses at the boys in the catboats and Mr. Stanford in particular, they steamed off to the dredger, and in half an hour or so one of the boys climbed to the top of his mast and reported that the tug with the dredge boat was making out to sea.

"Lucky for us we had you along, Mr. Stanford," said Sam, when they were on shore and he had thanked everybody for helping save Uncle Seth's oysters. "I had no idea you were a sheriff."

"I am not," replied Mr. Stanford, laughing. "But, what about your badge?" asked Sam.

"I saw that we had to bluff these fellows, and I prepared for the emergency with a revolver, in which there are no cartridges. As for the badge, I borrowed that from one of the waiters at the hotel," and he opened his coat.

"Number 16," read Sam.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### PAP HOLLAND

"SAM," said Uncle Seth the next morning at breakfast, "I reckon you saved me nigh on to a thousand dollars yesterday. Much obliged, I can tell ye."

Sam's father and mother opened their eyes in wonder at Uncle Seth's statement, for Sam had told them nothing of what had occurred at the "cow pasture."

"Why, Samuel," gasped his mother, "what does he mean?"

"Hain't he told you?" asked the Captain. "Wal, I swan, if that ain't jest like the boy. Why didn't ye tell 'em? 'Tain't every day a boy gits the best of a full grown man like that dredge boat feller. I'd never thought of it, no, sir, not in a hundred years." He then told the story with much slapping of his leg and guffawing.

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"Now warn't that purty cute, to block up the mouth of the 'cow pasture' with craft like that? Kind of a second Admiral Hobson, warn't he?"

Sam took his honors modestly and asserted it was Mr. Stanford to whom credit was really due.

"No sech thing," protested Uncle Seth.
"Your plan was what done the trick. Them
dredgers wouldn't have dared to run into
your boats, and I'll bet on you to have thought
up sunthin', if they tried it."

"Did you see a lot of your old friends yesterday, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam, seeking to

change the subject.

"Yes, quite a few, Sam. We old shell-backs are thinnin' out though—Oh, I must tell Ma—

"Ma," he called to Aunt Cynthia in the kitchen, "I see Pap Holland down to Provincetown vesterday."

"The miserable good-for-nothin' law breaker. I hope you didn't chum 'round with

him," spoke up his wife sharply.

"Now, Ma, Pap has his peculiarities—," began Uncle Seth.

"Peculiarities, huh, like killin' deer out of season and takin' scallops when it's against the law, same as he does, I should call 'em wussern that, Seth Nickerson."

"Now, Ma, Pap used to be a poacher, but you don't know the latest development. Pap's reformed, ain't done no poachin' for nigh onto two years and he told me he'd quit for good."

"You don't say," exclaimed Aunt Cynthia. "What, for goodness' sake, made him? Was

he caught and arrested?"

"No, he warn't caught," declared Uncle Seth. "I'll tell ye about it jest as Pap told it to me.

"You know, folks," began Uncle Seth, "he ain't never been what you'd call hard workin', Pap ain't, kinder shiftless like, but turrible good natured and kind hearted. Why, he'd do anything for ye. Wal, as Cynthia says, Pap did kill game and ketch fish out of season, that's a fact; broke the law a heap that way, if all they say about him is true. Seemed to take considerbul pride in outwittin' the wardens, more'n he did breakin' the law, I reckon. The wardens couldn't seem to git

evidence ag'inst him, though they knew he

was guilty.

"'Course, he was bound to git caught sooner or later, if he kept it up, but he didn't quit 'cause he was afraid. He had a change of heart and turned over a new leaf of his own accord. I never see sech a change in a man, never. He was dressed up neat, hair trimmed and looked real well to do.

"Pap and his wife, Laury, have lived on the same little place sence they was married. Both of 'em have gut the same easy-goin' disposition, and I suppose there ain't never been two happier folks livin' together in Saquoit, than Pap Holland and Laury. Pap's place was down at the heel, ramshackle house and ell with a coop of a barn that needed considerbul proppin' up, for Pap never believed in doin' to-day what he could put off till tomorrer," laughed Uncle Seth.

"He let things slide, and worked jest enough to scrape up a bare livin' and the rest of the time he put in gunnin' and fishin.' Both of 'em are mighty fond of children, though they never had any of their own. There warn't ever a child, that lived within walkin' distance of their place, but loved to go over there. Pap and Laury would stop everything and give 'em a good time. Laury would bring out some gingerbread or sunthin' for the little folks to eat, and Pap would take 'em 'round and entertain 'em generally. When they went home, mebbe they'd walk along squawkin' away on corn stalk fiddles Pap had made for 'em."

"Seth," broke in Aunt Cynthia impatiently, "you tack about so much, you don't git anywhere. What I want to know, is how did he come to stop his law breakin'?"

"I'm comin' to that, Ma," smiled her husband. "The real reason was that he and Laury adopted a little gal."

"Did you ever," gasped Aunt Cynthia.

"The mother and this little gal lived near Pap and Laury. The father had passed on quite a spell before. The mother and little 'Pewee,' as Pap calls the child, was poor, dreadful poor, hard put to git enough to eat sometimes. Finally, Pewee's mother was took down with the 'flu'. Laury nussed her faithful, but it warn't no use. She was wore out, poor creetur, and didn't have no more fight left in her. She died happy 'cause Laury promised to take little Pewee.

"Pap told me all this with tears runnin' down his cheeks. 'I tell ye, Cap'n Seth,' he says, ''twas purty tough, but we was turrible glad to care for Pewee. 'Twarn't no burden to have her, for Laury and me had allus loved the little thing. She jest come into our home and brightened it up like a posey. She took it natural enough, for she'd been with us a

good deal ever sence she was a baby.

"'When that leetle girl climbed into my lap, and put her arms around my neck and called me "Daddy Pap," wal, I can't tell ye, Cap'n, what a feelin' of goodness and Peace on Earth come over me. I says to myself after a while, "Look here, I've gut to be mighty careful. I can't ever do anything that'll make her ashamed of me." 'Bout the only thing I could think of that I done that warn't somewheres night right was poachin'. I jest soon tell you, Cap'n, now, I've done considerbul of that, fust and last, but I made up my mind I was through. Little Pewee calls me Daddy Pap and I've gut to live up to it. She ain't goin' to grow up ashamed of me.'"

"And a little child shall lead them," murmured Mrs. Hotchkiss.

"The little lamb," said Aunt Cynthia, wiping her eyes.

"You say he was looking prosperous?"

asked Sam, who was also interested.

"Yes, suh, Pap has spruced up amazin'. Says he has weeded out the old cranb'ry bog his pa left him and he's been tendin' it and gut a good crop last year. That, with workin' his farm and shippin' quahogs, he's gittin' right prosperous."

"I should think the officers would have caught him when he used to kill deer," said Sam. "He must have been pretty sharp."

"He was, I cal'late. I know one time, it won't do no harm to tell it now. It ain't nothin' for Pap to be proud of, but it shows that if he puts the same quick wit into the cranb'ry business, he'll git along.

"About a year 'fore her mother died, this same little girl, Pewee, had been sick and she was pickin' up slow and the doctor told her mother what she needed was plenty of good nourishin' food. Her mother done the best she could, but she didn't have the money to buy the nourishin' foods like chicken and sech. Doctor told her she ought to have chicken and beef to give her strength. Now meat was sunthin' the mother couldn't seem to manage nohow, it bein' so high, and she was tellin' Pap about it. Pap didn't make no promises, but in a day or two he brought over a nice little chicken, all dressed and picked clean. Wal, that was a Godsend to that woman, I tell ye. She couldn't thank him enough. He didn't tell her, but it was a partridge, and the law didn't go off 'em for quite a spell. Pap's chickens warn't big enough to kill.

"Pap kept bringin' 'em more chicken, and once in a while a piece of deer meat that the woman took for granted was beef. Well, the little girl began to pick up on that kind of fodder and used to watch every day for Pap to come down over the hill.

"One mornin' he'd been over to carry her a tender partridge and when he gut back to the house there was a game warden nosin' 'round the place outdoors. Laury had gone to the mills for the day. Pap knew him and as luck would have it, Pap had neglected to burn them partridge feathers, he had been in sech a hurry to git over to see the little girl. They was out in the shed in a box or sunthin' with some burlap throwed over 'em. Pap knew the warden wouldn't have to poke 'round much 'fore he'd find 'em sure as could be. He didn't appear to be disturbed, but said 'Howdy' to the warden, real chipper and friendly.

"Pap invited him into the house, and the warden says,

"'Pap, have you been shootin' partridges

or deer or anything?'

"'Shootin', no, I've had all I could do in the garden and quahoggin' and sech like; 'sides it's close time, ain't it, warden?' says he, smooth as a cat that's jest eat the canary.

"'Now, I'll tell ye, Pap,' says the warden, 'somebuddy killed a deer over by Lovell's pond last week. We found where it had been dressed right there. Tracks and bent bushes p'inted this way, and I have a notion that you know sunthin' about it,' lookin' sharp at Pap.

"'No, you're wrong, warden, the signs might have p'inted this way but you don't

want to take no stock in signs,' Pap comes back at him as serene as you please.

"'I'll have a look around, anyway. If you've gut any hides or any partridge feathers that I can dig up, I'll have to take ye along over to Barnstable with me.'

"'Sartin, hunt 'round all yer mind ter,' says Pap. 'One thing that you'll find is some tarnation good cider in the suller.'

"'Wal, that ain't ag'in the law, and I dunno as it's ag'in the law for me to have a drink of it, if it ain't too old,' says the warden.

"'It's sweet, all right. I took some early apples over and had 'em ground no more'n a week ago. Wait a minute and I'll go down and draw ye a pitcherful.' So Pap lighted a lantern, and takin' a pitcher, led the way down cellar. There was a bung, instead of a spigot in the barrel and Pap set down the lantern and worked out the bung stopper.

"'Quick, hold the pitcher, warden,' says Pap, as the cider came out with a rush. The warden jumped into position with the pitcher and Pap gut down on his hands and knees and was peekin' this way and that under the barrels and boxes in the cellar.

"'What's the matter, Pap?' says the warden.

"'I'm huntin' for that pesky bung stopper,' says Pap, still a peekin'.

"'Hurry up,' says the warden, 'this pitcher's

purty nigh full.'

"'Can't help it,' and Pap jumps around lookin' here and there. 'I can't see the durned thing. Jest clap yer thumb over that bung hole when the pitcher's full and I'll hustle upstairs and whittle out a new one.'

"The warden gut his pitcher full and then, doin' as Pap told him, held his thumb over the bung hole. Pap went off upstairs. When he gut out of sight he hustled, I cal'late. He grabbed that box with the feathers in it, put a brick in it, took a turn or two with a clothes line around it and run out in the yard and lowered the whole business down to the bottom of the well. He let the clothes line go down too, for he knew he could fish it up afterwards. Them feathers was all the evidence there was about, as Pap had buried the hides in a good safe place. He went back downstairs whittlin' on the bung stopper.

"'Thar, that fits jest as good as t'other one,"

says Pap.

"It orter for of course 'twas the same one.

Pap had it in his pocket all the time.

"Wal," as I said, "if Pap thinks as quick as that in lawful business, he won't have any trouble buyin' the pianner he's promised the little gal. I'm powerful glad he's gut on the right track. I allus liked Pap.

"Sam, let's git a mess of eels to-night. I

want you to eat some split eels."

### CHAPTER IX

#### SAM MAKES A PLAN

SAM and his father were getting to be great walkers, as well as great chums. They began by taking short walks, and as Mr. Hotchkiss gained in strength and his muscles grew less and less flabby, they increased their distances. Now that they had been at Saquoit five weeks, they took jaunts of five and ten miles with ease.

One lovely morning, with lunches in their pockets, they started off for a tramp to a promontory overlooking the great salt marshes. Their line of march took them away from the macadam thoroughfare of the whizzing motor car, through the woods. Cape Cod woods are criss-crossed by a bewildering network of these narrow dirt roads and paths, which are the delight of the tramper.

They swung along at a good pace; heads

and shoulders erect, arms swinging, breathing deeply of the clean invigorating air. After an hour or more with an occasional stop to watch a rabbit scuttle for cover, or to listen for a deer leaping through the bushes, Sam's sense of smell told him they were nearing the sea.

They had visited this particular headland, toward which they were traveling, many times during the summer, and as many times Sam had longed for the skill of the artist that he might take home with him this bit of Cape Cod, of which he had grown so fond. He loved the whole picture: the waving grass of the salt marsh with its various tints of greens and browns: the rolling sand dunes, sparsely covered: the ocean breaking white upon the beach.

"Why, father," he exclaimed, "some one is here before us."

"So there is, an artist," replied Mr. Hotchkiss, as he saw a large umbrella, such as artists use, on the very edge of the promontory.

At that moment a head peered around the shelter of the umbrella.

"Hello, Mr. Merrill," shouted Sam, who

recognized his father's friend and college com-

panion, Philip Merrill.

"Hello, yourself," said the artist, and then recognizing his Boston friends, came from behind his shade. "Well, well, how are you, Sam, and big Sam too? How in the world did you get down here? I supposed you would be at Bar Harbor, young man, and your father, how did you ever leave off money making long enough?" said he, addressing first Sam and then his father.

"I'm done with business till the first of September, Phil," replied Mr. Hotchkiss, "and I'm having the time of my life. Stopping at Saquoit."

"Good, I'm at a farmhouse near here. How

about you, Sam, like Cape Cod?"

"You bet," said Sam.

"That's the stuff. I'm glad to see you having a real summer. I've been here only a week," he added.

"That accounts for the fact that we haven't seen you before, for, until recently, we have been over here every week or so. It's a favorite hike of ours. I didn't know you went in for landscape work," remarked Mr. Hotch-kiss.

"I don't as a general thing, but I've been playing at it a bit. Taking it as a diversion. What I'm really after is just the right sort of person to paint while I'm here. I want to find a seaman, ancient mariner stuff, you know. I've been about and looked all over the old sailors but I find them all dressed up in good clothes and driving flivvers," he complained. "I haven't found just the salty flavor I've been looking for."

"Oh, father," exclaimed Sam, "have him paint Uncle Seth's picture and then buy it

and give it to Aunt Cynthia."

"By George, Sam, you've hit it. Phil, Sam and I know just the fellow you're looking for, only I want the picture when it's done. This man has done a good deal for us this summer, and I would like to show our appreciation."

"Goodness, that's a great way to reward a man: to subject him to the ordeal of posing,"

laughed the artist.

"Oh, he won't mind, Mr. Merrill," asserted the boy, "only I wish you could do it so he won't know anything about it and it will come as a surprise."

"Yes, we don't want him to pose, do we, Sam," agreed his father. "We would rather have him just as we have seen him so many times this summer, just busy at work or telling stories."

"That's a big contract," said the artist, "but if you'll attend to the subject, I'll do my durndest."

"Good, now that's settled. I'll have to depend on Sam here to handle Uncle Seth."

"Needs handling, does he," smiled Mr. Merrill. "You must have a temperamental party to deal with. I thought we painters were the only chaps, outside of musicians, who were supposed to have temperaments."

"It isn't temperament, Phil," replied Mr. Hotchkiss. "Uncle Seth hasn't a bit of it. He is entirely out and out. One of the most likeable and genial men I ever met is Captain Nickerson. His humor and homely philosophy are as refreshing as a whiff of the salt air. He's a man, every inch of him."

"Sort of salt of the earth, isn't he?" asked the artist quizzically. "That's just it. I think a great deal of him and so does Sam. We follow him around and find all sorts of pleasant surprises at every turn. He's what some people call a gentleman by instinct, and I'm mighty glad to have him for a friend. We're lucky in having Uncle Seth, aren't we, son?"

"Yes, sir," responded Sam heartily. "He's

great, Mr. Merrill."

"Well, I'll be glad to meet such a fine chap and paint his picture as well," said the artist. "It isn't very often that your father gets so enthusiastic over a person, Sam; he must be much worth while."

"You bet he is," asserted Sam.

"We'll run along now, Phil," said Mr. Hotchkiss.

"All right, sorry I can't invite you to lunch, but the fact is my boarding place is not a very satisfactory place to take guests."

"Oh, we brought our lunch," said Sam, "besides we have to make Shoot Flying Hill in time to eat lunch there, don't we, father?"

"Yes, but we'll see you soon. Sam will telephone as soon as his plan for the sitting is formed," said his father, with a smile.

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Sam and his father tramped along the road busily discussing just how they could keep the picture a surprise.

"What do you suppose he will say, father," said Sam, "when he sees a picture of himself,

all in colors?"

"You never know what Uncle Seth will say, Sam. I hope he won't by any chance be offended that we take that much liberty," said his father seriously.

When Sam and his father reached Uncle Seth's cottage late that afternoon, Sam had laid plans and his father had endorsed them every one, and clapped Sam on the back.

"Great scheme, that, Sam. But mum's the word."

# CHAPTER X

#### KILLING A RIGHT WHALE IN THE ICE FLOR

THE day was rainy, but Sam no longer dreaded rainy days. He and his father went to the work shop with Uncle Seth, where the old Captain had a rainy day job of making a handle for a quahog rake from a long strip of oak.

"What is that, Uncle Seth, a tooth?" asked Sam, pointing to a sharp object upon a shelf.

"Yes, Sam, that's a sperm whale's tooth," answered Uncle Seth, taking it down and handing it to Sam. "See the scrimshawin' on it? Purty clever, ain't it? See, there's a full rigged ship; there's a lighthouse."

"Who did this carving?"

"If I recollect right, 'twas Jim Folger—feller that went mate with me for two voyages. Likely to be a lot of spare time on sailor's hands, you know, and this was their

knittin' work. They made women's ditty boxes and inlaid 'em with bone. Some of 'em was right purty. I brought home a lot of sech stuff, but I guess I've gin it all away."

"Let's see, you said it was sperm whales you caught in the southern sea," said Sam. "Yes, sir, I remember, and it was right whales and

bow heads you caught up North."

"Wal, I swan, expect you'll be givin' me latitude and longitude next, or tellin' me you can box the compass," chaffed the old man.

"No, I can't do all that yet, but I'm going to if you will keep on teaching me," replied

Sam, his eyes shining.

"When you went after your Arctic whales," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "you picked the time of

year to dodge the ice, I suppose?"

"Wal, we tried to, but sometimes the ice was late in breakin' up, and then we was generally impatient to git in early so sometimes we gut caught. Yes, we run into ice now and then," said Uncle Seth, plying his draw shave on the strip of oak.

"Did you ever get caught in the ice, Uncle

Seth?" asked Sam, scenting a story.

"Yes, I have, 'fore now. On the fust voyage

that this Jim Folger was mate with me I got jammed. We had been cruisin' in the Indian Ocean after sperm whales, and I judged we'd jest about make the north country by April, so after refittin' ship, I sailed her right up to the Okhotsk Sea. We had a fair passage, and I run in to one of them islands in the Northern Pacific, to give the men three days' shore leave. I forgit what the place was.

"Wal, we went into the Okhotsk on schedule time, along the fust of April. We found the ice fields wide and purty heavy; 'course there was some open water, but it didn't look very promisin' for whales, which was what we was after. We worked the vessel 'round east of the largest packs to the north shore and then west-'ard to Taratek Bay. This bay is formed by a bend in the mainland, some twenty mile long and ten mile deep, with three or four fair to middlin' sized islands lyin' cross the mouth. The depth of water averages fifteen fathom, and most all shelvin' gradually to the beach. I had hoped to find the bay free from ice, but instead, purty soon we found ourselves wallerin' in the floe ice, not packed, you understand, but rangin' from single cakes to small packs

of an acre or two, with open water all through and between 'em.

"There we was. In a day or two that ice begun packin'. What makes it I don't know unless it's strong undercurrents, off several miles, that starts it pilin' up. There warn't a thing we could do about it, so we jest set as we was and waited. It begun to pile in, and in a couple of days more we was jammed in tighter'n a number nine foot in a number seven shoe. Our vessel was about a mile off what the whalemen call Bowhead Island, with a crescent shaped beach towards us. We could see chunks of ice two foot thick slide in on top of those already on this beach, till finally there was quite a wall.

"The vessel didn't git much bangin', but you couldn't tell when sunthin' would strike her. The ship Two Brothers, from Mattapoisett, within a mile of us, had a hole stove in the bluff of her bow as big as a two bushel basket. I kept my vessel under way all the time, jest kinder nosin' her 'round, and purty soon I see a big cake of ice six foot high, and coverin' over a big stretch, driftin' into the bight where I knew the water shoaled to the

beach. I dropped ship easy right up ag'in it—not to the wind'ard, you understand, but quarterin'.

"I sent men out on her with the kedge anchor and blubber hooks. They cut a holt for the anchor in the ice with the blubber hooks and made her fast. Then with hawsers I made the vessel fast to the iceberg, as slick as you please.

"I took in the head sails, and, with the after sails aback, we twisted that berg right around and gut under her lee in a good safe position. Git the idee?"

Sam and his father nodded.

"You see the big cake kept the smaller ones from pilin' up on us, and there we was as snug as a bug. They say it takes a thief to catch a thief and mebbe that holds true with ice cakes too—takes a berg to ward off a berg," he grinned.

"I recollect that this same Jim Folger come to me scared to death and says, 'Cap'n, she'll blow ashore and grind us to pieces sure as shootin'.'

"'Did you ever stop to think, Jim, that if that berg is six foot above water, she's thirty or more below? Wal, she'll ground a durned long ways from shore, leastwise a good way afore this vessel will, 'cause she don't draw so much as the berg, not nigh.'

"Now didn't everything work slick, though?

I don't know as I ever done anything that

tickled me more than that."

"Did you catch any whales, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam.

"Oh, yes, I was goin' to tell ye. The pack finally slacked up, and we worked the ship out of it and around it and see open water. Jest then the lookout sings out,

"'Thar she blows, sir.'

"'Where away?'

"'Off the port bow, sir.'

"Then things was hustlin', for this was the fust whale we had seen and all hands wanted to git him."

"Do you mean they were anxious for the sport of chasing him?" asked Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Wal, a leetle that, and a good deal more they wanted the catch to be big as possible, for whalemen allus go on shares in the season's ketch, that is, the biggest lay goes to the Cap'n and officers and so on down. The seaman's share is quite often a hundred and fiftieth of the ketch.

"The mate's boat struck a whale right away, and as usual the critter run for the ice pack. The third mate, yoddy that he was, fastened to him before he reached it, and then what did the man do but keep his line taut, and the whale hauled his boat along and rammed it into that solid ice. Stove her bow in.

"The whale run into the middle of the pack, and lay still in a bit of open water. Thar warn't nothin' to do but go over there on the ice and kill him. I elected myself to do the job, and started to take the bomb gun, but it weighed about forty pound, and I thought if I lost my footin' on that slippery pack, I didn't want no extry luggage hitched to me, so I put it back and took my hand lance, as sharp as a razor."

"You were going on foot over the ice to kill that huge creature with your own hands?" questioned Sam, aghast.

"I sartin meant to, Sam. That was my business, killin' whales, and the bigger they was the more ile they had."

"You've told me they were as big as a house,

but to go out on slippery ice to kill one, it must have been a great stunt."

"Not if you was brought up to it. I'd been used to it all my life, purty nigh—there's everything in gittin' used to it. Wal, as I say, I went slippin' and slidin' out over that ice for the whale. If you can imagine goin' up alongside of a barn and rammin' a lance into it and sudden have it begin to flop 'round, you can understand how it feels to do the same with a whale, for he is as big as a good sized barn. I found I couldn't reach him from the main pack, so I jumped to a smaller floating piece of ice and went right up alongside of him. I gut in jest the right place and then I let him have it. 'Course it was foolish, especially as I was on that floater, for jest as soon as I struck him, he spanked the water with his tail and Solomon I. Mackerel! how that water biled. The cake of ice I was standin' on tipped up on edge quicker'n a scat and the edge of it stuck way out of water. I thought my time had come for a minute, but instid of tippin' toward the whale, it tipped toward the main ice and I slid off'n it head over heels

right out on solid ice. Now warn't that lucky?"

"Did you get the whale after all?" asked Sam excitedly.

"Yes, we did finally. That whale dove and come up to the wind'ard, run towards shore and sunk in 'bout fifteen fathom. We had the line on him all the time. I sent the boats over there and waited. I kept track of 'em with my glass but it begun to git thick and come on to blow up kinder strong, so I h'isted signals for 'em to come for the ship. It gut thicker and thicker, so I knew sunthin' had to be done. It was blowin' so now that I doubted if they could fetch the ship. I run to the leeward of 'em, luffed to the head of the land, dropped the tops'ls on the cap and picked up the boats. I sent all hands aloft then and doubled reefed the tops'ls and put the old gal to her mettle gettin' an offing."

"Getting an offing," said Sam, mystified. "What's that?"

"Gittin' her away from shore where I'd have plenty of sea room. The wind was on shore, and every sailor steers clear of a lee shore in a gale er wind, for he can't git headway to work his vessel and she's most likely blown ashore," explained the Captain.

"Mr. Folger came to me and he was scared. 'Cap'n, if you don't shorten sail, you'll tear

the masts out of her.'

"'Jim, how fur off shore be we?' says I.

"'Bout eight mile,' says he.

"'Are we gainin' any?' says I.

"'Jest about holdin' our own.'

"'Jim, how deep do you reckon the snow is on shore?"

"'I guess about two foot, Cap'n. But

what's that gut to do with it?'

"'Two foot deep and the nighest settlement mebbe forty mile off. Are you hankerin' to waller 'round in two foot of snow for forty mile?' says I. He allowed he warn't particerler about it. 'Then,' says I, 'we ain't no wuss off here, pervidin' the masts tear loose, for we sartin couldn't live ashore a great while. The masts won't tear out, Jim, that's my guess.' And I was right.

"About two o'clock in the mornin' the wind veered 'round to the nor'west and blew the snow out to sea and then died down purty comfortable. At daylight the wind was off shore and we went back and gut the dead whale."

"And you hadn't forgotten about the whale all this time?" laughed Sam.

"Not by a jugful we hadn't. We gut him alongside about noon. The breeze was then light but we was only three mile from shore. What would you have done fust if you had been in my place?" Uncle Seth asked Sam.

"Got an offing," shouted Sam.

"Right," laughed Uncle Seth, slapping him on the back.

"That's what I done. At midnight we'd finished cuttin' in, and had the blubber stowed between decks. She come on to blow again, this time from the norrud with snow and all the fixin's. 'But let her blow,' says I. Everything secure between decks, a good crew, and a good vessel under my feet, every prospect of a good season ahead and plenty of sea room, I didn't care how hard she blew or how thick the snow. All was well."

## CHAPTER XI

#### SAM GOES CALLING WITH UNCLE SETH

"MR. HOTCHKISS, would you and Sam like to go with me this mornin' to see a couple of old shipmates of mine: Cap'n Peter Sprague and Cap'n Joel Handy? They live down on the Cape a ways. I love to see these old cronies of mine once in a while, they're real entertainin' and neighborly. I've sailed the seas alongside of both of 'em, and two finer fellows you never see. Ben Childs' boy will take us down in his auto."

"I would like to go very much," promptly responded Mr. Hotchkiss.

"So would I, too, Uncle Seth," assented Sam. "I like to be with you when you meet your old friends and get to talking of the times you had together on the sea."

"I'll tell ye I never had one half the experiences on the sea that them two fellers had," said the old skipper. "Joel is the smallest of the two, and frail lookin', but I've seen him curl up a six foot foremast hand, with no marlin spike to do it with, nuther. He was a mighty able man, and is yit, and so was Peter. If you'll remind me sometime, I'll tell you of the time Peter's schooner took fire in midocean, in the dead of night, with a gale blowin'."

"I won't forget," promised Sam.

"Joel and Peter never run up with one another, to git real well acquainted, till one time in New York. Both of 'em had run in there with a load of granite or sunthin', and while the vessels was being unloaded, they went uptown together.

"Captain Peter was hard of hearing in his starbud ear, couldn't hear scarcely nothin' out of that ear and Captain Joel, as it happened, was also totally deaf in his starbud ear. Neither one of 'em knew t'other's infirmity. They walked along for a spell, when Peter, seein' that he had his starbud ear to t'other feller, tacked and shifted to Joel's starbud

side. Purty soon, Joel, havin' difficulty in hearin' Peter, fell back and run up alongside Peter's starbud.

"Purty quick Peter noticed that Joel was on his wrong side ag'in, so he shifted. Then Joel took another hitch and run in where he could hear what Peter was sayin'.

"They both sashayed back and forth quite a number of times and at last Peter stopped

stun still and he was mad.

"'Dummit, man,' says he, 'what are you grand right and leftin' about? Why don't you keep your course?'

"'Why don't you keep your course your-self?' says Joel, mad as a bantam. 'Peers to

me you're doin' considerbul tackin'.

"'Why, you durned old shellback, can't I walk where I want to? I can't hear nothin' out of my right ear, and I been tryin' to git my good ear 'round so I could hear sunthin', but you been dancin' backwards and forruds, like a petrel on a slick, so I couldn't.'

"'Wal, now,' says Joel, 'ain't that funny! I'm havin' the same trouble you be. I can't

hear nothin' scurcly out of my right ear, and I ben shiftin' for the same reason.'

"They both begun to laff and the trouble was over. One of 'em 'lowed that they'd have to draw lots to see which would have to walk backwards. This bein' deaf seemed to bring 'em closer together, and from that on they was fast friends."

"How did they manage after that in walking up the street?" asked Sam, when he and his father had stopped laughing.

"Wal, would you believe it, they kept on makin' hitches," said Uncle Seth. "I think they kinder liked the idea of seein' folks stop in the street that mornin' to watch 'em. I reckon the old fellers gut as much fun out of it as the people did watchin' 'em.

"When they told me about it, they laffed and laffed—thought it was a great joke. Said they shifted oftener than was necessary and the crowd gut so thick that a policeman had to keep 'em movin'.

"After that episode, as I say, the two gut real chummy. When they quit the sea, they quit together. They come ashore, bought a

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little house, hired a housekeeper and here they've been ever sence."

Just then Oscar Childs drove up, and they started off on their visit to Captain Peter and Captain Joel.

# CHAPTER XII

# CAPTAIN PETER AND CAPTAIN JOEL

THE party alighted before the small cottage of the two captains. Sam and his father exclaimed at the attractiveness of the place. A rustic gate shut off the path to the house from the roadway. Forming an arch over the gate, was a section of a whale's rib, as Uncle Seth informed them, and hanging from this huge piece of bone was a sign, upon which was printed in neat lettering "Hoopskirt Cottage." Uncle Seth explained the curious name for a house.

"In the old whalin' days," he said, "the demand for whalebone depended a little bit on the fashions, and while hoopskirts were in style a lot of bone was used in their makin'. In fact, hoopskirts increased the demand for whalebone astonishin'. These two skippers bought this house, so they say, with money they

gut from one season's haul of whalebone. Bein' queer kind er critters and likin' to cause folks to talk, they said, 'Why not give credit where credit is due?' We gut this house because of hoopskirts: we'll name it in commemoration of that institution.'"

The three went around to the side door where the housekeeper informed them that the two captains were in the garden. There they found them puffing away at their pipes, and weeding onions.

"Ahoy the ship," yelled Captain Seth.

"Ahoy yourself and see how you like it," returned one of the old men, whom Sam found afterwards was Captain Peter.

"Head her up into the wind and come alongside," shouted the other.

They shook hands with Uncle Seth and his guests delightedly and allowed they were "all-fired glad to see ye all."

"Come on in the cabin for a gam," invited Captain Joel.

The cabin was a small low room in the rear of the house fitted up as nearly as possible like a ship's cabin. In bookcases along the walls were books on navigation and log books of

past voyages. A vessel's wheel hung over the door. Sea chests, with elaborately carved handles, ranged along the sides of the room. A ship's lantern was suspended from the ceiling, and pictures of square riggers and schooners hung on the walls.

Sam gazed about the cabin in admiration and interest, while the men got out pipes and tobacco and proceeded to enjoy a "gam."

The term "gam" corresponds to the land term "gossip." When two whaleships spoke (met), one signaled the other to heave to and the captain would come aboard for a gam. One vessel had been home since the other: one had news, or perhaps letters for some one on board.

"Wal, Sethie, how yer ben?" asked Captain Peter.

"Purty fair, Peter. Reckon I shan't have to be hauled up for quite a spell yit," replied Uncle Seth. "How goes it with you, Peter?"

"Oh, it's been a fair wind with me most all the time," he answered, "but Joel here, I hate to tell ye, but Joel is goin' down hill fast. He's growin' old, Joel is."

"Ain't no sech thing, Sethie," snapped that

worthy of seventy-four. "Pete's the one that's slippin'. I can throw him two out er three times any day. Reckon I'll have to be puttin' him to bed nights now 'fore a great while. Yes, suh, Peter's slippin' mighty fast."

They kept on with this raillery, much to the amusement of the others, until Seth touched off a bit of powder, evidently always ready to

ignite.

"What I can't understand, Peter, is how you ever come to let Joel git ahead of you so beatin' up the Hudson that time," grinned Uncle Seth.

"Git ahead of me nothin'," snorted the old

skipper. "I beat him fair and square."

"He never, Sethie," said Captain Joel, his small body quivering with wrath. "Why, that old oyster boat of an Ann Hinckley might go along a fair clip if she was hitched to a good tow-boat, but, as for gittin' ahead of the Sara Lee under her own sail, she never see the day she could do it. There warn't a boat out of Cape Cod that could take the wind the Lee could, and in a light breeze you could almost blow her along with a palm leaf fan."

They were off. Forty years before, when

they were not so well acquainted as they were in later years, the two had started up the Hudson together, and beating back and forth across that great river, they had run neck and neck. Each, afterward, claimed the victory and the years had not worn off the zest of the argument as to which was the smarter boat. This was the only subject upon which the two disagreed seriously and when some one mentioned it, the fireworks began. They forgot that they loved each other devotedly, and almost came to blows, they were so eager to convince the listener that one, or the other, had been the winner.

"Right you are, you could almost blow her with a fan. She was what sailor men call limber," retorted Peter, turning to Mr. Hotchkiss. "Limber as an eel."

"Warn't limber, neither," snapped Joel, looking wrathfully at Captain Peter. "She never give, more'n any vessel should. That old Ann Hinckley of Peter's was a square rigger in her day, Mister. Peter rigged her over into kind of a schooner or a sort of mongrel brig, and at her best, nobody ever dared use her for more than plum pudd'n voyages."

Mr. Hotchkiss and Sam were enjoying the battle hugely.

"What are plum pudding voyages. Captain?" asked Sam.

"Oh, jest whalin' voyages down off the Carolinas and back. That's why they called 'em by that name, 'cause they was so pleasant and easy like. They used vessels that couldn't stand much ice in the Arctic," explained Captain Joel, looking triumphantly at Captain Peter, as though he had scored a point.

"Never went on a plum puddin' voyage," contradicted Captain Peter, "from the time her keel was laid till she was broke up. No, suh, she was a boat, the *Hinckley* was. She was a square rigger and I made her over into a schooner rigged craft, and smart, I tell ye. She was the smartest vessel in a tight place I ever see."

"That's right, Peter," sarcastically rejoined Captain Joel, "the tighter the better. Take her jammed up ag'in the wharf, and hitched with two hawsers, and she'd behave right purty. One of the best vessels, tied up to a wharf, I ever see. With some good men at

the pumps, and her tied up like I say, I reckon I'd risk stayin' with her quite a spell."

"He's lyin' and he knows it," yelled Peter in desperation. "She never leaked a thimble; ful in a month. I tell ye, the kind of ship the old Lee was, and what kind of a skipper she carried. When he see that he was goin' to be distanced, goin' up the river, he sent a man up into the fore cross trees shiftin' tops'l every time he tacked. Yes, suh, that's the kind of a sport he was. I sailed along jest as I would if he hadn't a ben there, and for all his dancin' 'round, like a petrel on a slick, we beat him, only he'd never own it."

"Peter means well, Mister," said Captain Ioel, sadly, to Mr. Hotchkiss, "but as he grows older, this idee that he beat us gits rooted in his head, and you can't git it out with a grub hoe. He's told about it so often that now I

suppose he believes it himself."

This softer tone of Joel's never failed to make Captain Peter all the more wrathy. He smoked his pipe furiously while his shipmate was speaking.

"What did my fust mate, Nathan Weeks,

say about it?" he demanded. "If he was alive, he could tell ye. If I'd known what a shifty kind of a cuss I had to deal with, I'd gut Nate's affidavit and had him swear to it."

"You could git him to swear to it all right. You could git him to swear that his grand-father was a jail bird, if you gin him tew dollars," commented Joel, feeling that his listeners were with him.

Uncle Seth, feeling that the fun was over, and that a truce should be declared, sought to pour oil on the waters.

"Wal, you boys suttinly had two of the fastest crafts in the coastin' trade. After you gut out of Albany nobuddy could touch either of ye. Mr. Hotchkiss, they could sail circles 'round any of the fleet, couldn't ye, boys?"

"Sure could," they both agreed in unison,

beaming upon each other.

"With everything goin' right, we could lay it over all of 'em, couldn't we, Petey?" nodded Joel.

"I guess we could, Joel. I'll say that we passed a good many of 'em in our day."

The storm passed, as quickly as it had come,

and once more the sun shone brightly. The two old men nodded knowingly to each other, and lived once more those good old days when they had out skippered and out sailed the best of Boston Bay.

"Time we was movin' on, folks," said Uncle Seth at last.

"Stay to dinner, can't ye?" asked Peter.
"Goin' to have clam fritters, and you know
Miss Jenkins' clam fritters, Sethie."

"Yes, I do, Peter, and thank ye jest the same, but I told our folks I'd be home for dinner sure so I guess we'll be movin'."

"Does Ben Peters still live across the street here?" asked Uncle Seth, as they were getting into the automobile.

"Oh, yes," answered Joel, "he's jest the same old Ben too. He and Cap'n Joe Henry come over 'bout every night and the four of us play euchre. Ben tells jest as many good stories as ever."

"He sartin' does," agreed Peter. "He told one the other night about his father and him hitchin' a hoss that was funny."

"Let's have it," urged Uncle Seth. "We can make up time on the road. I've heard

Ben and I want Mr. Hotchkiss and Sam to hear one of his yarns."

"You tell it, Joel, you can tell it better'n

"No, no, you go ahead, Peter."

"Wal, I can't tell it the way Ben did, but it was sunthin' like this. Ben says: 'When father and me was coastin', we used to make Hyannis in the Lucy Blossom, and while we waited for the wind to shift, we'd hire a hoss and buggy and drive over to Osterville to see the folks. One time we put in on the way to Boston with a load of coal for Medford. Comin' over Pollock Rip we'd had purty rough weather. Lost part of our riggin' and was leakin' good. So while the repairs was bein' made, we decided to see the home folks, ez usual, and we hired a rig from Hiram Crocker and driv over.

"'We didn't have any barn at our place, and as 'twas warm weather pa hitched the old hoss to an apple tree. He wa'n't much used to hosses, fer he done most of his cruisin' on the sea, and there, he wouldn't take backwater from none of 'em. He did sartin hate to reef wussern pizen. I've seen him goin' 'round

Point Jude in a sou'easterly with all sails set when every other skipper would be reefed

down purty snug.

"'Wal, ez I was savin', pa didn't know much about hosses. He hitched this one with plenty of warp out so it could feed all around the tree, jest ez he would hev anchored a vessel so she couldn't drag. We looked out purty soon and the critter was foul of the rope and down on the ground wallerin' in the trough of the sea, so to speak. So we went out and untied his moorin's, and pa 'lowed he'd fix him; so he gut a heavy stick of stove wood and hitched it to one end of the rope and then rove t'other end of the rope through a block he'd lashed to a branch of the tree, and made it fast to the hoss's head. Pa's idee bein' that the stick of wood wuz goin' to take up the slack in the rope and allow the beast to feed without gittin' tangled up.

"'We watched the old hoss and he got along fust rate, so pa and me went into the house, and pa said all you needed wuz a leetle com-

mon sense on water or land.

"'I got through supper fust, and looked out to see how pa's riggin' worked, and there was that hoss up near the tree with his nose held right up among the branches. The stick of wood wuz a leetle too heavy, and as the hoss fed nearer and nearer the tree, it took up the slack, and bimeby it took the hoss's head up. Mebbe the rope caught in the pulley or sunthin'; anyway, he couldn't git his head down to feed nohow.

"'I was jest goin' to tell pa when the Methodist preacher driv up and saw the hoss with his head stuck up in the apple tree. The preacher wuz a dry kind uv a cuss. He looked the situation over fore and aft, and then he hollered, "Hiel!"—pa's name was Jehiel, you'll recollect—"Hiel!" ez loud ez he could.

"'Pa come to the door to see what wuz wanted, and the preacher sez, "Hiel, if you'd hitch that air hoss up by t'other end he'd feed better." "

"That's as good a one as I ever heard Ben tell," chuckled Uncle Seth on the way home. "He's the champeen story teller of this section. I don't know of a man on Cape Cod that can tell as many good stories as Cap'n Ben Peters."

"I do," said Sam to his father quietly.

# **CHAPTER XIII**

### THE WRECK OF THE "IDA M."

OU were going to tell us about Captain Peter being shipwrecked," suggested Sam the next day when he and his father had found Uncle Seth busy in his workshop.

"Oh, yes, so I was," mused the Captain, as he squinted along a piece of oak he was

planing.

"Let's see, what was this Captain Peter's last name?" asked Mr. Hotchkiss. "You've called them Peter and Joel and I don't remember their last names."

"Peter Sprague and Joel Handy, both of 'em Cape names," said Uncle Seth.

"I don't exactly remember what year 'twas that Peter had his mix up," began the old sailor, "but he'd jest been made master of the *Ida M. Eaton*. She was a big schooner, four master and near a thousand tons. He'd been

on one or two trips in her to South America, mebbe. At this time I speak of, he started out for Bermuda with a mixed cargo but a good deal of it was kerosene. Skippers warn't partial to carryin' kerosene, for that was in the days before they took the gasoline out of it, and it was purty dangerous stuff."

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "it was

highly explosive in those days."

"Things was goin' fust class with 'em. They was makin' fast time. She could sartin' sail, the Ida M. could. Wal, when they was about two days from Bermuda, the wind come up a leetle mite stronger and shifted. It warn't no gale, you understand, but wind enough so they took in the outer jibs, mebbe. It kept comin' stronger instead of goin' down with the sun. In fact, there warn't no sun, for it had thickened up. They kept reefin' and takin' in, 'til 'bout midnight they hove to in a howlin' gale.

"It was blacker'n pitch and the gale kicked up a tremendous sea. She was ridin' it out all right and Peter warn't worryin' none, when everybuddy was brought up all standin' by a bang! in the forrud hold that shook the whole

vessel from stem to stern.

"The kerosene ile had exploded.

"All hands rushed on deck and when they see what the damage was, they run below ag'in to pick up what clothes they could, for they knew it was all up with the Ida M. A hole was blowed in her bow, rippin' off bow sprit and jib boom. Flames shot up inter the riggin', clear to the cross trees. The forrud part of the vessel seemed to take fire all to once. With the headstays gone, crash! went the forem'st. Then that big thousand tonner, with her whole bow ablaze, her head sails gone, come up inter the wind and the gale shot those flames aft quicker'n a scat.

"The lifeboat hung across the stern and it was goin' to be a tough job to clear ship, with the flames rakin' her clean to her taff rail. They shielded their faces as best they could and climbed into the boat, hung on the davits. Some of the men had nothin' on but shirt and trousers, they'd been routed out so sudden.

"Peter stationed a man with an ax at each of the davit tackles and he himself stood on the deck. The two men stood with axes ready for the word to cut the rope and let the boat drop. Peter watched the sea, for sometimes

the water was jest a few feet from the bottom of the lifeboat, and in another minute it would be twenty or thirty foot below it. If he didn't give the word at the right instant, the boat might have drop enough to capsize her. If one rope warn't cut at jest the same second the other was, 'twould mean the boat would hang by one end and spill 'em out into the heavy sea.

"Peter Sprague stood on deck with his hand raised, the flames dartin' all 'round him. When that hand fell, the men was to slash. I expect if ever any of them fellers prayed, they prayed right then that the job wouldn't be bungled.

"He see the sea comin' again. He watched it come near and nearer. He dropped his arm quick and yelled,

" 'Cut.'

"The axes swung. The ropes parted at the same instant and the boat, with the sailors, dropped a matter of a few feet on an even keel."

"Then they were safe," said Sam, with a sigh of relief.

"Wal, not quite, Sam," said Uncle Seth.

"Peter was still on deck and it was his job now to git aboard the lifeboat. The sailors pulled off a little ways, and now he had to go hand over hand on a line reachin' from the vessel to the small boat, hand over hand out over that sea. He swung out on it and a sea met him. It buried him but he hung on. He gained a little and held it, as another thirty foot wave pounded him. Inch by inch that feller fought, hopin' and prayin' that the lifeboat wouldn't capsize. The stern riggin' begun to burn, and the flames licked dangerous nigh to where the rope, by which he was travelin', was hitched. A tremendous big sea tore him from the warp. He made a grab and caught it with one hand. He was near enough to the boat so he could make out that they was yellin' encouragement to him through the roar of the wind and the waves.

"The end of the rope made fast to the vessel dropped; it had burned off. He hung to the loose line and the men begun to haul. Under water most of the time they dragged him and he clung on. When they gut him aboard they had to pry his fingers loose from the rope.

"The crew put out an old piece of canvas

for a drag to keep her headed up, then they jest huddled together in that little boat, cold and wet, waitin' for daylight.

"Before they'd left port, the mate had took that boat ashore, and bein' careless, he'd taken out a good many things and had neglected to put 'em back. When daylight come, they looked over the craft to see what they had in the way of provisions and sech. That fool mate had sartin' made a clean job of it. No compass, no sail, and how much water do you think? Five gallon was all they could find. And to cap the climax, the drawer of food that the cook had managed to yank out of the galley and throw aboard, was the wrong drawer and all there was in it was a bundle of salt herrin'.

"Now warn't that what the writer fellers would call the irrunny of fate? Salt herrin's, with only five gallon of water among seven men. If they eat the salt fish, they'd be thirsty as time, and if they didn't eat 'em they'd most likely starve to death purty soon. They could take their choice, starve or die of thirst.

"They did find a few tins of hard tack that somebuddy had neglected to take out. This,

with salt herrin' and five gallon of water, was all they had to keep 'em goin' for how long nobuddy knew.

"Captain Peter put the men on reefed rations, so to speak, and they settled down to watch for some sign of passin' boats. They rigged up the piece of canvas on an oar for a sail, and steered by the sun to cut across the regerler way of vessels.

"The mate was purty well cut up, 'cause he'd been the one to blame for some of their trouble. He was a nervous kind of er feller, anyway. The second night, along before daylight, the mate was on watch and Captain Peter was waked up all standin'. The mate, Johnson, was huddled up in the bottom of the boat, and 'twas him that had waked the Cap'n.

"'What's the matter, Johnson?' he says.

"'Do you hear that, Cap'n?' he says, tremblin' like he had a chill.

"Cap'n Peter heard it sure enough. Sunthin' kept thumpin' on the side of the boat.

"Thump, thump, thump, it went, slow like, with a kind of gratin' noise to boot. I s'pose most anybuddy'd been startled out there in the middle of the ocean, to be hittin' sunthin'. Must have sounded kinder strange to 'em.

"There it come ag'in. Thump, thump, and then this peculiar raspin'. Cap'n looked over the side, but it warn't light enough to make out anything. Every little while would come the bumpin', and the mate would scooch and shiver. Thought it was some spook of Davy Jones', I reckon, come up to haunt him and rappin' on the boat to be let in. Course he warn't to blame, poor feller, for feelin' nervous after what he'd passed through, with nothin' scarcely to eat for two days and nights.

"It gut light enough to see before a great while and the Cap'n finally made out what it was. He called to the mate to look. It warn't nothin' unnatural, even if it was a leetle disagreeable. What do you think? It was a shark. An old J. W. Linger, eighteen foot long, with a pilot fish ahead of him, near six. He'd been bumpin' his nose and flappin' his tail ag'in the boat all night."

"What's a pilot fish?" asked Sam.

"A long narrer fish that goes ahead of a shark. It is thought that this fish hunts out food for him. You know a shark is naturally

the laziest critter that ever lived, and don't like to do nothin' he don't have to. The pilot fish ain't able to do much killin', so he p'ints the way, the shark does the killin', and then lets his guide have some of the food. I reckon that's the way it is, though I've heard different stories."

"But, Captain Seth, why doesn't the shark eat the pilot fish?" laughed Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Wal, I reckon, that as mean as a shark is, he knows which side his bread's buttered on, and bein' so allfired lazy he don't want the bother of lookin' up another pilot fish," explained Uncle Seth, dryly.

"How did they explain the rasping sound on the side of the boat?" asked Sam, determined to know all the facts.

"Why, the shark's tail made that noise. You know a shark's tail is just like sandpaper. Remember how rough the skin of that dogfish was that we caught when we went after scup? Wal, the shark is like that, only more so. You know a dogfish is a species of shark.

"Where was I? Oh, yes, wal, suh, they tried all kinds of ways to drive that shark away from the boat. They prodded him with oars and they splashed water around him to scare him off, but no go. The mate and some of the men had heard about sharks follerin' boats for days at a time, seemin' to have a sense of comin' disaster, when they'd git sunthin' to eat. They figgered that they was goin' to git capsized or sunthin', and that shark bein' in league with the devil, knew it and was jest follerin' that boat waitin' to make a meal of 'em when the time come. Sailors are likely to be a superstitious lot, you know, and them fellers bein' in sech a scrape, their nerves was in shape for almost anything."

"Why didn't they try to kill the shark with

an ax or something?" inquired Sam.

"Wal, stickin' an ax into an eighteen foot shark, when you're in a twenty-one foot boat, might not be reel healthy exercise," chuckled Uncle Seth. "It might scare him off, and then ag'in it might not. It would depend on how hungry he was, I reckon. Leastwise, they didn't try it. Might have worked all right. Anyway he gut sick of hangin' 'round, and after another day he went off and they never see no more of him. That chirked 'em up con-

siderbul, for they felt that one bad sign had gone.

"The water question was a serious one. Cap'n Peter doled out jest enough water twice a day to wet their lips good. He didn't dare give 'em more, for he didn't know how long it had gut to last, and he wanted all hands to hang on as long as they could. The hard tack he rationed out, of course, and a mighty small piece he give each one at a time, I guess.

"Peter knew he must be purty near the p'int in latitude where they was likely to git some rain, so he cut a piece of canvas from their makeshift sail and had it ready to catch the rain water.

"One mornin' about daylight it come on to rain, but not very heavy. They caught what water they could and poured it into a spare jug they had. They thought that luck was with 'em, but they was considerbul disappointed when they come to drink some to find that it was salt as time; so salt they couldn't drink it. You see, they used this canvas for a drag the fust night, and then the spray had splashed on it, so it was saturated. Not

enough rain fell to wash the salt out, so once again they gut down in the mouth. They was purty thankful they hadn't poured the salt water into the other jug partly filled with fresh water. I guess if they'd done that, they would

have been ready to give up.

"When they'd been out seven or eight days, some dolphins hove in sight and begun to play around the boat. The men said that even raw dolphin would keep them from starvin', though the hard tack warn't quite all gone. The next thing was to ketch one of 'em. There was some line on board that would do, but not a sign of a hook. One of the sailors made sunthin' that he thought would answer by filin' a piece of wire to a p'int and crookin' it up. He tied on a red flannel for bait and begun to fish for a dolphin. Everybuddy said there warn't one chance in a million that one would take holt, but after one of the critters made a grab or two at it, the men begun to git interested and watched. I suppose it kept their minds off their predicament some to watch that dolphin caper 'round after red Do you know the feller finally caught him. Yes, sir, gut him into the boat.

"They dressed him, split him and flattened him out so he'd dry out enough for the sailors to eat."

"Do you mean they were going to eat the thing raw?" came from Mr. Hotchkiss in astonishment.

"Sartin' they was goin' to eat him raw. Couldn't cook him. They had a cook, that's true, but a cook without his galley is about as helpless as a monkey with a cud of tutti fruiti gum. You recerlect, they'd been out for eight days, and though they had hard tack for that day, they knew the supply would only last 'em twelve hours after that. You'll do most anything if you have to, Mr. Hotchkiss, and if it's jest a question of eatin' raw fish or starvin', I reckon most of us would choose fish on the half shell so to speak.

"They had to take what they could git. If they couldn't git what they wanted they had to do the next best thing. Makes me think of Billy, a colored cook I had aboard ship one time. Billy had tremendous big feet: biggest foot I ever see on any human bein'. One day I was goin' ashore, in Charleston I guess it was, and Billy wanted some shoes. He'd been

goin' barefoot a good part of a week.

"'Boss Cap'n,' he says, 'ah wish you all would git me a pair ob shoes. Git numbah fo'teen if you kin, but if you kain't git fo'teen, git numbah thirteen and a bottle ob Doctor Green's foot ease.'

"So it was with these fellers, they had to take what they could git. They was gittin' purty down in the mouth, and no wonder. Three of the sailors begun to git a leetle mite obstreperous and Cap'n Peter caught one of 'em tryin' to sneak an extra drink of water from the jug. The water ration was about a half a glass a day. As I say, this sailor attempted to steal an extra and Cap'n Peter, knowin' that any feelin' like that would have to be nipped in the bud, laid the feller out with a club.

"Right then and there the old man, with the mate and cook on his side, laid down the law to the men. Told 'em that they was playin' fair with 'em, but if ever any one of 'em tried that again he reckoned he'd have to beat some reason into 'em. They knew when they was on a lee shore, and though they was sullen, they never tried to come it over Peter after that.

"The next mornin' about nine o'clock, one of the men yelled, 'Sail dead ahead.' Over to the norrud was a three-masted schooner movin' the same way they was. Everybuddy begun to shout and wave whatever they could lay their hands to. They set a colored shirt on the oar and kept on yellin'.

"Purty soon the schooner signaled that she saw 'em and started to come about. The men were wild with joy on board that little boat. They hugged each other and whooped and hollered. The schooner was ahead of 'em and they steered a diagonal course towards her.

"Jest then the schooner turned about ag'in and went right off on her original course, without so much as 'are, yes, nor no.' What do you think of that? The fellers from the Ida M. was stunned, I cal'late. They started to holler ag'in but the ship was sailin' fast and was soon out of sight. What the matter was I never could figger out, nor they nuther. Mebbe it was sunthin' to do with insurance.

If the schooner was insured to make such and such a trip by such and such a course and she should change her course and git into trouble, mebbe the insurance company wouldn't pay nuthin', I don't know. It seems like a purty slim excuse, but I can't think of any other.

"Cap'n Peter done his best to cheer 'em up, though he warn't much chirked up himself. He knew this, though, that if they'd seen one schooner, they must be in the path of vessels and that meant if they could hold out long enough, keep the same course or cruise about in the same spot, they'd sure strike sunthin' sooner or later.

"Sure enough they did. In the afternoon of the same day, the wind sprung up from the east'ard, and it seemed likely they was in for foul weather. This didn't help their spirits none. The hard tack was down to one more round and the water to two rounds. They had took hitches in their belts every day, for they hadn't had enough to keep 'em from growing thin. Hard tack ain't very fillin', 'specially when it's taken in homeopathic doses.

"The old man was sittin' aft, steerin' and

lookin' around the horizon for sail. The others warn't payin' attention to anything. They was plum out of courage. All of a sudden, Peter see what looked like a four master over to the nor'west comin' right towards 'em. That was what it was. He squinted at her to be sure his eyes hadn't played him any tricks. There she come, a spankin' big vessel. Cap'n Peter turned his boat so he'd run purty nigh before the wind and cut into the schooner's path. If he could sail nigh enough to her before she tacked it would be all right. He didn't say a word to the men, for he didn't want 'em fooled ag'in and this craft might serve 'em same as t'other one did.

"The sign of distress was still on top of the oar, so Peter jest set tight and waited. Some of the men was asleep in the bottom of the boat and others settin' with their heads bowed.

"The schooner tacked, and as she did, the little twenty footer slid on top of a sea and evidently somebuddy on board the big vessel see 'em, for in a minute the vessel h'isted a signal that she was comin' to their aid.

"When Peter see sure that there warn't no doubt about it, he sings out, 'Mebbe you fellers

are goin' to stay aboard here another night, but I'm goin' aboard the schooner yonder. You can do as you're mind ter.'

"Every one of 'em come to with a jump. They saw the schooner bearin' down on 'em. They sprung up and give a cheer; a purty feeble kind of a yell it was, I cal'late, but the best there was in 'em, poor fellers.

"'We'll go down by ye and come about,' an officer yelled from the vessel. That voice sounded good to Peter, I reckon, for it sounded

like Cape Cod.

"Peter give each man an equal share of all the water there was left right then and there; two days' rations and the first sizable drink they'd had in nine days they'd been out.

"When that crew from the *Ida M*. was hauled over the side of the vessel, I reckon they was tough lookin' critters. I see the Captain of her afterwards, and he said they looked as gaunt as racin' cod fish, every one of 'em."

"Who was the captain, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam, as the dinner bell rang out and Uncle Seth brushed the shavings from his clothes.

"The captain of the schooner that took 'em aboard? Why, that was Cap'n Joel Handy in

the Mary Anderson, bound for Rotterdam. "By time," he continued, as they went out of the work shop, "I hope Cynthy's gut plenty of quahog chowder. I feel as though I could eat a bucketful. It allus makes me powerful hungry to tell that story."

# **CHAPTER XIV**

#### THE PLAN PROGRESSES

UNCLE SETH was in the sail loft busily adding the finishing touches to a jib he was making. He sat on a stool, plying his needle as deftly as a seamstress.

He wore a small knit skull cap upon his head. The sunlight, streaming in at the windows of the long low room, lighted his face and caused his white hair and beard to seem all the whiter. His face above the beard was ruddy with health.

In this room, with its brown rafters, its coils of rope neatly in place, and its storage of nautical appliances, there was an atmosphere of romance and strange tales. One thought vaguely of buccaneers, rich silks and spices from far-off lands.

There was a tramping on the stairs and Sam and his father came in, followed by the artist whom they had met on their walk a few days previous.

"Captain Nickerson, I want to introduce a friend of ours from Boston, Mr. Merrill," said Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Glad to meet ye, Mr. Merrill," said Uncle Seth, rising from his work. "Stoppin' in the village?"

"No, I am boarding at Balmouth for a few

weeks, Captain," responded the artist.

"Ain't stayin' at Ezry Jimson's, be ye?" asked the old Captain with a twinkle in his eye.

"Yes, it is the best I could do. I am not

very well satisfied with the place."

"No, I reckon you ain't very well satisfied. It don't do no harm to say that, nobuddy is for long. Ezry's so mean he'd make his own mother go on short rations. I don't generally talk about other folks' shortcomin's, but I'd jest as soon talk to him about his, in fact I have done so."

"He doesn't set a very good table, but his charges are high," said the artist.

"You bet Ezry won't forgit to charge. They used to tell about his gittin' up fish dinners years ago on holidays and Sundays. That was before we had much summer company on the Cape. He'd advertise and git quite a lot of trade. Folks never went a second time, though, for as you say he'd charge, but his victuals warn't much to brag on.

"One Sunday, he'd fed quite a few folks and they'd gone along on the way down the Cape. Ezry was settin' on the front stoop, when purty soon one of the neighbors heard him yell to his

wife, who was in the kitchen:

"'Marthy, Marthy, here's another crowd comin' over the hill. Put some more water in the chowder.'"

"From what I know of him, he would be quite capable of doing that," laughed the artist. As Uncle Seth had been talking, Mr. Merrill had been looking over the old sail loft, his eye akindle with interest.

"You'll excuse me, if I keep on workin',"

apologized the Captain.

"Yes, yes, go right on," they urged.

"Captain Seth," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "my friend is a painter, and he wishes to know if you will allow him to paint your sail loft."

"What!" exclaimed Uncle Seth, his mouth

agape, "wants to paint it, what for, for times' sake? I like it the way it is."

"Oh, no, Captain, I am an alleged artist and I wish to paint a picture of it," explained

Mr. Merrill, laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, don't that beat all? I understand. You said he was a painter and I thought you meant house painter. Wal, I am purty thick, and no mistake. Why, yes, you can paint as many pictures of it as you're a mind to, though I can't for the life of me see why anybuddy should want to do it. When do you want to begin? I hope not too soon. Give me two days and I'll clear things up a leetle mite. I'll git a lot of my dunnage stowed away and give ye clear decks."

"Oh, Captain, please don't do that. The place looks just right now," gasped the artist.

"No trouble at all. Any friend of Mr. Hotchkiss is entitled to that much from me, I reckon. I'll fix it shipshape, mebbe by to-morrer."

"No, no," interrupted the painter. "I want the room just as it is. I want to get just the air that your workshop has now."

Uncle Seth looked puzzled. "The air," he

said with a look at Mr. Hotchkiss as much as to say if you say he's all right, why, he is of course, but— "you don't aim to paint the air—"

"Captain Seth," explained Mr. Hotchkiss, "Mr. Merrill means that these sails, sea chests and all, he wishes as a part of the picture. They fit in with what he wishes the picture to be."

"I guess I see. Wal, go ahead, but if Cynthy finds out what you're goin' to do she'll be reel put out that she didn't know it soon enough so we could clean up."

"May I unpack my traps and begin this morning?" asked Mr. Merrill.

"Sartin. If you'll wait ten or fifteen minutes I'll gather up this sail and stuff and be out of your way."

Both men insisted that he remain. "You won't bother me a bit," said the artist. "Go ahead with your work and chat with Mr. Hotchkiss and Sam."

"Sam, why ain't you in swimmin' this mornin'?" inquired Uncle Seth. "Tide's good and high."

"Nobody's going in, Uncle Seth. There were three sharks in the harbor yesterday, and every one is scared to go in the water," grinned Sam, sheepishly.

"Sho, don't believe sharks will harm ye, but it ain't real pleasant if you know they are there."

"I should say it wouldn't be," exclaimed Mr. Hotchkiss. "That ends your bathing, Sam, I guess. I never knew sharks came near Cape Cod."

"Plenty of 'em," asserted Uncle Seth, "sech as they be, sand sharks, mostly. Bless ye, ain't no call for Sam to stop goin' in the water. They'll be gone in a day or so; chased a school of fish in most likely.

"You know, a few years ago there was a great scare went up all along Cape Cod about sharks. The newspapers played it up big. Such a large number of sharks as appeared along the coast and they warn't any more plenty then than they have allus been. Yes, suh, there is sharks here. Out around the Hoss Shoe they git a lot of 'em. I understand now that there are boats out there most every day makin' a business of ketchin' 'em for sale."
"Heavens, they don't sell them for people to eat, do they?" asked Sam.

"Oh, some folks eat 'em. I've tasted of shark myself. It tasted purty fair while 'twas hot, but when it gut cold it tasted purty sharky, if you know what I mean.

"I have a notion that these fellers ketch shark and sell 'em for the hides mostly. They say the skin makes wonderful leather. Mebbe they sell the meat under a fancy name, for all I know."

"Are these the same kind of sharks that we read about, the man eaters?" asked Sam, almost shuddering, for he had fished at the Horse Shoe.

"They ain't what we generally call man eaters, sech as we find in Southern waters; them are the white sharks. These are big enough, but they are sech cowards they wouldn't attack a man in the water unless they was awful hungry. They might if the man stayed still in the water and didn't splash 'round much. Would you like to go out and kill some, jest so you can say you've done it?"

"Do you suppose I could catch one my-self?" asked Sam eagerly.

"Sure you could if he warn't too big," an-

swered the old Captain.

"Look here, Sam," protested his father, "I don't like the idea of catching one of the brutes just to kill it. It would be of no use to you and it seems like unnecessary cruelty."

"Wal, Mr. Hotchkiss, it does seem that way, but if you'd ever been a sailor, your conscience wouldn't trouble you so much. They destroy a pile of fish, break down my weirs once in a while and, as Sam says, scare the bathers from the beach: besides their hides are of some use. If I caught one, I'd aim to turn it over to one of them fellers that's catchin' 'em for their pelts."

"Your explanation of the damage they do, and the fact that their hides make good leather puts a different light on it," agreed Sam's father.

"Shall we go fishing for them, father?" asked Sam.

"Yes. I'll admit I'm a bit curious to see one of them pulled in."

"Good, when can we go after them, Uncle Seth?" he asked.

"I guess ter-morrer's as good time as any, Sam," replied the Captain.

"You must have to use a very large line and

hook, Uncle Seth," said Sam.

"Yes, we want to use a big hook but there's a difference in taste about the size of the line. I'll tell ye. There's one doctor from Boston that comes down here every summer sharkin', and he uses a five ounce rod and a silk line, sech as he would use in lake fishin'. He caught a six foot shark last summer with this rig and he told me he was over an hour landin' him!"

"Whew, that must have been great. I guess I don't want to try a light rod, though," said

Sam.

"I'll tell ye. I've gut a regular tarpon rod and line my boy Robert brought home from Florida. He used it down there and had great sport. I'll take that along and we'll try fishin' with that and see how we make out, eh?" suggested the Captain.

"Oh, that'll be great," exclaimed Sam. "I am sure father will like it. He has fished for

tarpon, too."

"Sartin, I'll go down to the shore the fust thing in the mornin' and git the boat ready and see if anybuddy has brought any perch or anything in that I can git for bait."

# **CHAPTER XV**

### SAM KILLS A SHARK

THE next morning Sam dropped the anchor of the Cynthia B. just east of the Horse Shoe reef. Uncle Seth had completely broken down Mr. Hotchkiss' scruples and Sam's father was rather enthusiastic.

"After all, Uncle Seth, I don't believe I would want to miss this," he admitted.

"I'm sure I shouldn't," declared Sam. "I only hope we can get them to bite."

"They'll bite fast enough," said Uncle Seth.

"You say that you have eaten shark meat, Uncle Seth," said Mr. Hotchkiss, as the Captain was arranging the tackle.

"Yep," said the old man, handing Sam the tarpon rod. "I've eat shark. I've eat most everything, I guess, in my time. Let's see, where are them hooks? I've eat shark, whale, porpoise, alligator and skunk. There, I guess

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that's all the curious things anybuddy ever tried."

"I should say so," said Sam, making a wry face. "I don't believe I'd want to tackle any of those except whale. I guess I would just as soon try that."

"If I could only keep my mind off what I was eatin', skunk tasted the best of the lot," remarked the old sailor, "and alligator next."

"Won't you use the rod, Captain Seth?" asked Sam. "I don't want to have all the fun."

"No, I guess I'll stick to the hand line for the present. After you git one, you might let your Pa take it, for I want to see what he'll do with a six foot shark with a rod and reel," grinned the Captain.

Sam was trembling with excitement at the mere hope of catching any kind of fish six feet

long.

"There, there, Sam, calm down. We may have to wait quite a spell before they take holt and you don't want to git all tired out beforehand. Wal, folks," said the old man calmly as his line began to go out, "I really think that I have connected with sunthin'."

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The old sailor showed no more agitation than he did when he had a scup on the line, but pulled in, and let out when the pull was too strong.

"Have that hatchet handy, Sam," he said, as he gradually brought the fish nearer the sur-

face.

Sam was not so calm. He stood up to get the first glimpse of the fish. His heart was thumping as though it would jump out. Tense in every muscle, he strained with Uncle Seth as the fish started to run again. Now toward the bow, now toward the stern and now under the boat.

"Jimminetty, he does fight some, don't he?" puffed the Captain.

"There he is," cried Sam, as a back fin showed on the surface.

"All ready with that hatchet when I git him near the boat," said the Captain.

"I can't kill him," stuttered the boy.

"Course you can kill him. If he turns on his back, look out for his teeth. Has to turn over before he can bite. Now then, there he is. Hit him, Sam. Hit him ag'in, the varmint. Put it right to him." Sam hacked away with all his might. The sensation of killing such a huge brute was rather nauseating at first, but after the first blow, maybe the blood of his sailor ancestors stirred in Sam, for when the creature turned slowly on its back and snapped savagely at his arm in spite of Uncle Seth's efforts to hold the huge fish still, he forgot his timidity. The hate for the shark, which is inherent in those of the sea, seemed to rise within him and with grinding teeth, he struck to kill.

"Look at that now," said Uncle Seth, his breath coming in gasps from his exertion. "Ain't he the ugly lookin' devil, though? I hate 'em wusser'n Satan hates Holy Water. Mebbe five foot long. Look at them teeth—ain't they wicked? Cant in, they do, you notice."

"Where are you going to put him?" asked Sam, not relishing the idea of becoming shipmates with such a monster.

"Moor him alongside till those fellers yonder take him. They're dirty critters, sharks are, and mess up a boat turrible. The smell of a shark stays 'round a boat for a long time. I don't want him in here for anything. If that's a camera yer Pa has gut there, jest wait till you git yours and I'll h'ist him up so you can take a picture of him. I guess you'd like it, wouldn't you, Sam?"

"You bet I would," answered Sam. "Wouldn't that be a great thing to take back to show the fellows? My, I guess their eyes would stick out." But then, he hadn't caught one yet and if he did, perhaps it would be a small one.

"I've got one," he cried, and braced his feet to hold the rod.

"Put your thumb on that leather, and mebbe that'll slow him up a bit," counseled Uncle Seth. "There, now take him in a little. That's right. Not too fast. If he pulls too hard, let him run a little, but keep a strain on him all the time; that'll tire him."

Sam followed the directions. His father hauled in his own line to give a hand if Sam needed help. Uncle Seth noticed that Mr. Hotchkiss contemplated giving aid, and said:

"Let him be, Mr. Hotchkiss. Sam's good for it alone. He can do it." Sam gritted his teeth and played the shark carefully. Now the reel whirred, in spite of the drag he put upon it. Now the creature started toward the boat and he had to reel in quickly. Now he was quiet, only to dart suddenly to the right or left. He moved with astonishing suddenness.

"Lost him. No, he's still on. How he runs!"

The end of the rod dug into Sam's ribs, but he heeded it not. The reel grew warm under his hand. He was conscious of an ache in his wrist, as he matched his strength against that of the shark.

"That's the stuff, Sam," encouraged his father. "Hang to him."

"Yes, sir," gasped Sam. "I'll—do—my—best."

Uncle Seth grinned contentedly to himself. Fifty feet of line ran out in a moment. "Look out," cried Uncle Seth, "he's comin'." And sure enough Sam had to reel fast to keep in the slack. The shark sank sullenly and once more the reel sang. Now he comes again. His plunges were growing less violent.

"You've got him tired," said Uncle Seth. "Keep a strain on him all the time. That's the boy."

He was getting Sam tired too. The boy's wrists and hands ached cruelly. Every muscle in his arms and shoulder seemed ready to snap, but he hung on grimly. Quit! he wouldn't quit as long as he could move his arm.

He could ease up now for the fish was fast growing weaker. His rushes were shorter and less speedy. Sam was reeling in now. The huge back fin came to the surface.

"No wonder he fought hard, look at the size of him," exclaimed Mr. Hotchkiss. "He's better than four feet, Captain."

"He is a big one, and no mistake. I'd say he was considerbul better than four foot, and it's a wonder you could handle him for ten minutes, let alone gettin' him up to the boat."

Sam was weak as a rag, but Uncle Seth's words made him glow with pleasure and pride. A fish better than four feet long and he caught him on a rod. And this was quiet Cape Cod.

## **CHAPTER XVI**

# THE LUCK OF THE "MARY ELLEN"

"I HAVE read that some vessels are unlucky," said Sam. "They always have something unfortunate happen aboard of them. Did you ever see one of those ships, Uncle Seth?"

"Sartin, I've seen what they called unlucky ships: I made a voyage in one once."

"Did anything happen? Were you ship-

wrecked?" asked Sam, quickly.

"Do you kinder hope I was?" laughed the old man. "Wal, I'll tell ye, and you can judge for yourself whether there is anything in the stories you've heard. This craft I speak of was the Mary Ellen, out of Nantucket. She was a new vessel as whalers go. Been on only two voyages before I took her. Whalin' masters was shy of her, though generally they are sensible sort of men. I allowed I'd take

her and if she warn't cranky about sailin', I'd resk her.

"Her fust voyage she had lost a whole boat's crew of fourteen men. There warn't nothin' unnatural about that. Purty tough, but not the vessel's fault, twisted her reputation, though, some way. Her next voyage, a halfbreed cook run amuck down in the Indian Ocean and slashed the Cap'n with a butcher knife. The critter went crazy, I reckon, and they had to put him in irons. The Cap'n went into the galley and told the cook how he wanted some porpoise meat fixed up for the crew, and the cook gut mad and talked up to him. The cook was a Spaniard or sunthin', and, when the Cap'n begun to rage 'round, the cook up and begun to hack at him with a butcher knife. If it hadn't been for the mate hearin' the rumpus, I guess he'd done for him.

"Course they enlarged upon these stories and turned 'em 'round, and by the time she gut into home port from her second voyage, the yarns they told was real spooky. Wal, as I say, I took her. We made a fair passage down 'round the Cape of Good Hope and, after makin' port for water and vegetables,

we went to huntin' sperm whales in the Indian Ocean

"About twenty degrees south latitude, I guess it was, and around sixty longitude, I sighted a lone whale. I lowered and went in the boat instead of sendin' the mate. The whale lay right still on top water and he was a J. W. Linger; a gray-headed old bull and I says to myself, 'We're goin' to have considerbul of a ruckus with you.' The boat went up nearer and nearer to him, and he didn't pay any attention. I drove both irons into him and he flopped a little and run about in circles but didn't cut up much, so I gut the lance ready and went up alongside ag'in. In a minute after I lanced him, he begun to spout thick blood and I knew I had him.

"I never had a whale act jest the way he had. He'd been driv out of the herd by younger and smarter whales, but he'd been a fighter, and had fought his way to the last with the younger ones for his jaw was twisted. Some of his teeth was gone and there was scars on his old head, where he'd been wounded in battle. He'd acted as though he was tired of the struggle and gin up easy to us. I kinder

pitied the critter, for a fact. Mebbe he was discouraged, who knows. Layin' there like an old derelict all ready to break up.

"It was purty calm and as we was towin' that whale to the ship I noticed sunthin' in the water near him and I hollered, 'Back on your oars, there's ambergris.'"

"What's ambergris?" asked Sam.

"Sunthin' that comes from sick whales, and wuth more than its weight in gold. They use it in makin' perfumery and sech. Wal, suh, that's what it was sure enough, and it weighed nigh forty pounds, quite a junk. That whale was the largest sperm whale I ever took. He made a hundred and nine barrel of oil and it's a good one that makes eighty or ninety. So much for the fust part of our voyage on a ship that was unlucky."

"What made the whale sick, do you sup-

pose?" said Sam.

"Oh, I don't know. Eatin' too much squid, mebbe. Mebbe he was jest old and worn out and his digestion weak. His teeth was so poor and so few that I wondered how he could eat anyway.

"We had good fishin' there until it was time

to start north for Arctic whalin'. We wanted to git up there long in the spring, so we sailed to the nor'rud along the coast of Kamchatka. west of the Aleutian Islands, past Copper and Bering Islands, and about the fust of June reached Cape Thaddeus on the west entrance of Bering Strait. Here, we found six or eight whale ships ahead of us and all catching whales aplenty. We went right at it. Ice was here as well as the whales, but that didn't bother us none to speak of. We begun to kill whales and in two days had four, which was all we could handle, so we had to let up till we'd cut in and filled every bit of space with blubber. We worked north and had grand success. The ice pack, as it broke, drifted out of the straits and we plowed through it and follered the whales, takin' 'em as fast and faster than we could take care of 'em.

"We finally reached latitude seventy. There the pack was solid and stayed so all summer. By the fust of September we had nearly filled ship and the fleet was leavin' for a warmer climate. It was time, too, for the nights was lengthenin' and snow squalls was frequent. Still we had room for one more

whale, and I wanted to git it. Ain't that jest like folks wantin' a leetle more than they gut, and, when they gut that, a leetle more still? Hogs most of us be, I reckon, till we get old enough to know better.

"I kinder reckoned, if I could fill ship up with oil, that mebbe it would stop the talk about the Mary Ellen bein' unlucky. It had been hard to git crews for her. That was 'fore the days when the crimps shanghaied so many aboard whalers.

"Wal, I gut my whale. Yes, suh, gut him alongside while snow was fallin' and sea was makin'. 'Twas after dark when we had the last of the blubber aboard and the men was all beat out. They'd had it purty hard and had put in a good fourteen hours: there warn't no talk about union hours in them days.

"'Drop everything and set quarter watches,' says I to the mate.

"'The barometer is fallin', sir,' he says.

"There warn't much sea yit, and the men had worked hard, so I says, 'I don't think bad weather'll set in for another six hours. Let 'em have a little sleep.'"

"What are quarter watches, Uncle Seth?"

"One boat's crew with the boatsteerer, on watch for two hours, instead of two boats' crew, with an officer in charge, on duty for four hours," he answered.

"I must have dozed off myself, for the fust thing I knew I heard a yell, 'All hands on deck,' and I was nigh flung out of my bunk. The ship was on her beam ends and the wind roarin'. I got on deck as quick as I could. It seems the wind had come up quick from the nor'west and down went the starbud side to the leeward. On the fust blow of the gale, when the ship heeled away, the whole mass of blubber, which we had jest piled around most anywhere and not secured, slid over to the lee side and held the ship down. The sails was jest clewed up instead of bein' furled, as they should have been, and they was slattin' and thrashin' 'round till you'd think they'd rip the vards from the mast.

"The starbud boat went with a crash and water poured in over the rail and some went down the hatches, for they had been left open. The loose spades, hooks and pikes, all sharp tools that had been left layin' around, was slippin' over the decks and the men was in danger of bein' gashed. Come what might, I had to send the men aloft to furl them sails fust. Then we hitched life lines to their waists and the crew gut about as best they could, gittin' the movin' stuff stowed. Most of the time they was up to their arm pits in water that was icy cold. It wouldn't do any good to wear ship so to bring the submerged side to wind'ard, for every sea would have come on deck, a hundred tons at a time. 'Fore noon the gale begun to let up a little and, Sam, I felt so much to blame for all this trouble that I tell ye I was mighty thankful to see her die down a little. I was only tryin' to do the men a kindness in lettin' 'em go below for a rest without fixin' things up shipshape. Shouldn't have let 'em go nohow, with the barometer fallin', but, as I say, it was jest a case of poor judgment on my part. That's what I say about a lot of these unlucky ships you hear about. It's the poor judgment of some feller, like myself, that causes 'em to have a bad name.

"Wal, the wind moderated and, since we was only a little way from the ice pack, the sea moderated with the wind and we wore ship, gut the slidin' blubber snug between

decks and squared away for the straits on our way to the Sandwich Islands.

"We run part of the way under reefed tops'ls but most of the time it was fine with a fair wind. Had a fustrate passage all the way home. How's that for a voyage in a ship that has a bad name, eh, Sammy? Biggest whale I ever gut, forty pound of ambergris. and a full cargo of oil in the Arctic. Best voyage I ever had, fur's money is concerned. I sailed the Mary Ellen till I quit whalin' and a better nor more sturdy craft I never bent sail on. Pooh! for your spook ships."

## CHAPTER XVII

#### THE RUNAWAY SHIP

S AM and Uncle Seth were shucking scallops, which they had picked up along the shore that morning. They had gone out at the last of the ebb tide and had found scallops in abundance. It was after September 1st, and they were allowed by law to pick them up for family use, if they didn't use nets or any implements.

"Uncle Seth," began Sam, "when it's blowing hard at sea and you got a whale alongside, how in the world could you cut in with the

whale bouncing around so?"

"Didn't allus cut in then," replied the old whaler.

"If you tried to moor the whale alongside, I should suppose your vessel would be damaged," commented Sam.

"Wal, I'll tell ye," explained Uncle Seth, deftly slipping a scallop mussel from the shell. "One time we had been down in the Indian Ocean and come up to Van Diemen's land, Tasmania it is now, place where the whale ships allus turned to go north. We run between Tasmania and New Zealand and I sighted a whale. To make a long story short I gut him and towed him alongside. In this particerler place we used to run into dry gales. The wind would blow turribly. Wal, I gut this whale up to ship and one of them gales struck us. I couldn't cut in and I darsen't tie him up alongside the ship, for, as you say, it would do some damage, so we made two whale lines fast to his flukes and let out a hundred fathom. I made the ship's end fast jest forrud of the fore riggin'. Now yer see that the whale would act as a drag and keep her nose up to the wind and the oil from the whale made a slick on the water that broke the seas considerbul."

"I can see how it worked," exclaimed Sam, who needed fewer explanations now, when it had to do with boats. "That was a great scheme, Uncle Seth."

"Was kinder cute, warn't it?" smiled the old sailor.

"You needed a pretty level head to think of such a way out of trouble, didn't you?" remarked Sam, hoping to start his old friend off

on a story.

"I reckon we did," assented Uncle Seth. "Sometimes we had to think fast and if we didn't think right, it might be all day with us. I did git into some trouble in my time but I don't count it more than the ordinary run, but I generally gut out of a mess purty

lucky.

"Yes, suh," he continued, "sometimes when sunthin' comes up quick you've gut to think fast. You can't have your mind upsot. Anything that upsets a man he'd better git out of his system, if he's goin' to be a sailor. One thing that has lost more lives and property than any other, I think, is rum. Yes, suh, rum's done an awful lot of damage, one way and another. A lot of captains thought they had to have a stock er liquor aboard in case of sickness and some of 'em portioned it out to the men when they had a big job to do. They thought that rum was the only thing to

give a man for chills. I never carried a mite aboard one of my vessels, and I never see a time when I wished I had any. If a man had chills, I could warm him up aplenty with a bowl of hot ginger tea, I tell ye. Give him a lot of it, strong as he could drink it, and put him to bed in warm blankets wropped around him and I'd resk but he'd git warm."

"I should think the men would bring liquor aboard without your knowing it sometimes," said Sam.

"They did, but I generally found it out purty soon. I remember one feller did kinder come it over me once, though. I'll tell ye about it.

"'Twas on this same voyage where the dry gale struck us. After we weathered it, we sailed north, between the Society and Fiji Group. When we reached the Okhotsk we put in there, for the season was early for Arctic fishin'. We done purty well, too, for the fust day we gut three whales. About the fifth day, I guess it was, late in the afternoon, we sighted two whales.

"We have to on the starbud tack, so to lower the three port boats." "Why did you have to heave to on that tack?" interrupted Sam.

"So the port boats would be on the ship's lee. There was some sea makin' and we could lower the port boats without so much resk of their swampin'," explained Uncle Seth.

"Wal, ye see when we took the starbud tack, that p'inted the ship in the opposite direction frum what the three boats was goin' after the whales. We left the cooper aboard to keep ship. He would wear ship as soon as we had left and bring her around so she'd be p'intin' the way the whale boats was goin'.

"We made for them whales and was mebbe two mile frum the ship. Two of the boats had struck and the boat I was in was jest hangin' around to lend a hand if we could, and I happened to glance back toward the vessel. My! but I was startled. There she was away to the west'ard sailin' right away from us at a good clip. What in tarnation had gut into that ship keeper, I didn't know. What had gut into him was rum, but I didn't find it out until afterwards. I yelled to the other two boats that sunthin' was the matter and I was goin' after the ship. They was busy with the

whales but they sung out that they'd stay around but it wouldn't do no good to chase a ship goin' as fast as the Mary Ellen in a whale boat.

"It seemed like a useless thing to attempt but I didn't know of anything else to do, so we stepped the mast in a hurry and made after her. It didn't seem like no time at all before she was hull down and goin' strong."

"Why didn't you stay by the other boats and

wait, Uncle Seth?" asked Sam.

"Cause I couldn't see no use in that. If the cooper or ship keeper was sick or crazy, I couldn't expect him to do anything like come back and I thought he might run her into sunthin' and we might catch up with her. It was hard to know what to do, so I follered. Wouldn't have done much good to stay with the others. They didn't need any help.

"We warn't no match for her at sailin', of course, but we had a purty fair stock of water and provisions, and I was determined to hang

to it.

"There was quite a sea makin', and it was curious to be playin' tag in the cold and wet with a big vessel like the Mary Ellen. We

was 'It' as the boys say in tag, but it looked as though the cooper had his fingers crossed and we couldn't tag him. It was then that I learned from one of the crew, that the Cooper Banks had a little stock of rum that he'd gut when we made Spring port in New Zealand. 'That's the trouble,' thinks I to myself, and what I planned to do to that feller, if we ever gut aboard of her, would have made Cap'n Kidd look like a Sunday school teacher.

"We sailed the best we could all night. At daylight the next mornin' we see the Mary Ellen.

"She was a right smart ways off. I watched her through the glass and she was sure a boilin'. As I looked, a little change of wind, mebbe, struck her, leastwise her bow swung, her head sails caught aback, threw her round and in a few minutes she lay up in the wind with all her sails flat ag'in the masts."

"'We'll overhaul her,' I yelled. 'She's up in the wind.'

"'We may, but it'll be too late,' said one of the men. 'She's too nigh the lee shore to suit me.'

"Sure enough. On her lee was a low stretch

of rocky shore jest beginning to show up, and she was driftin' towards it stern fust.

"We was on the port tack. I headed up all she'd stand and we bumped along purty lively, with plenty of water comin' aboard. If we could git aboard her before she struck shoal water, we might git an offing. We was about five miles from her, I should judge by this time, and that was a tryin' spell for us—for me in particerler, for I had considerbul at stake. She had a good deal of ile aboard her, and she was a mighty good craft, besides, that I couldn't afford to have smashed up on the rocks.

"The space betwixt the Mary Ellen and the shore grew less and less. We was leggin' it towards her the best we knew but it warn't nigh fast enough to suit me. 'Twas purty hard to jest set there and see a good able vessel goin' for the rocks and know that if you was only aboard her you could save her. Yes, suh, 'twas purty tough. I'd ruther not watch her, and yit I couldn't help it.

"'We'll never save her, Cap'n,' says Eb

Patten.

"'Mebbe not,' says I, 'but I won't give up

till I have to. She ain't movin' as fast as she was.'

"'Draggin' on the bottom, mebbe,' says Eb, givin' me no comfort whatever.

"I driv that whale boat for all she was wuth. I used all the kinks I knew of to git the most out of her. There was a full boat's crew aboard of her, and it seemed a pity that we couldn't help her along, but all we could do was to hope.

"The Mary Ellen was driftin' a little more, quarterin' towards the rocks now, and that

helped my courage some.

"'We're goin' to make it,' I says, and jest about that time there come a sudden gust of wind, and mebbe I warn't tendin' sheet as sharp as I might, for the fust thing I knew we was all in the water; our whale boat had heeled too fur, and capsized a hundred yards or so from the Mary Ellen. Everybuddy gut clear of the ropes and gear of the whale boat and I hollered, 'Swim for it.'

"That water was purty cold, I can tell ye, when I fust struck it, but I started for the ship, all the others follerin'. After that first plunge I didn't mind the cold, but my boots and

clothes bothered me, so I shed as many as I could without losin' any time. I had started a purty brisk pace and shortly I had to slow up and take it a little easier.

"To make my story short, I reached the Mary Ellen fust. I climbed over her side and nobuddy was in sight. Afore I hunted round for Banks the ship keeper, I set the crew at the sails and tacked out of there in a hurry. When I had shaped her course, I went below to see what Mr. Banks had been tryin' to do, and git his side of the story, if he had any.

"I found him in his bunk fast asleep. Did you ever see the beat of that? The fust thing I done was to heave overboard a whiskey bottle, partly full, that was settin' in the corner where he could reach it. I throwed a pail of cold sea water all over him and he waked up splutterin' like a porpoise.

"'What ye got to say, yer confounded

drunk?' says I.

"He was purty sober by this time. I guess the cold water helped, but he groaned and rubbed his head that I s'pose was achin' like time. I didn't have much sympathy for the critter and yanked him onto his feet. He was unsteady on his pins but I helped him along, I reckon, for I was madder'n a hatter, and set him up on deck.

"'I guess I'd better tie ye up by the thumbs,' I gritted at him. With that he begun to beg me to let him off, and he'd never drink another

drop as long as he lived.

"'That's what they allus say,' says I, 'but I'll tell ye, I'll let ye off if we find them poor fellers that are somewhere about in this bunch of water in open boats. I want you to sign the pledge, and have plenty of witnesses, and if ye ever break it, I'll have ye up in court for attemptin' to steal a craft and endanger the lives of all the crew. That'll be wusser'n mutiny, and they'll hang ye for it. If I ever hear of yer takin' another drink as long as ye live, I'll hunt ye down and let the law give ye all there is.'

"He was willin' to agree to anything, and after I'd made him drink a pint or so of black

coffee, he felt a little better.

"It warn't till the next day that we picked up the two boats. They had stayed right nigh where I'd left 'em. They'd waifed the two whales that they'd killed, and everything come out all right."

"Would you have tied him up by the thumbs, Uncle Seth, if you hadn't found the men?"

"Wal," he smiled, "tell yer the truth I don't think I would. I said most anything, I was that het up, but I had no idee of punishin' him any more. I figgered he was punished enough with the way his head was feelin'. I might say that he stuck by that pledge, and I knew him for the next ten years purty intimate, and I never heard of his takin' another drink."

"How did he happen to go off in the opposite direction?"

"He was jest fuddled with liquor that he'd been drinkin' on the sly. When I left him that mornin', I didn't notice anything wrong with him, but as soon as we pulled away from the vessel the liquor went to his head, I cal'late, and instid of wearin' ship as he should and follerin' on after the boats, he got bewildered and braced forward the mainyard, set the mains'l and stood away to the west'ard, gittin'

more rattled every minute. When he found things warn't goin' right, he went below for another drink, and kept goin' and the Mary Ellen layin' to it. When she'd run off about twenty mile, the wind shifted a mite and Providence took a hand, you might say, for the ship keeper was dead to the world by that time probably. The head sails caught aback, threw the ship around and when we see her in the mornin', as I say, there she lay with all her sails flat ag'in the masts.

"Yes, suh, that's the only time that rum come near gittin' the best of your Uncle Seth."

## CHAPTER XVIII

#### THE BOAT RACE

"MR. HOTCHKISS," said Uncle Seth one morning during the last week of the Boston man's stay, "there's goin' to be a catboat race in the outer harbor, next Thursday afternoon, for twenty-five footers and under. If you have no objections, I'm goin' to enter the Cynthy B. for that race."

"Why should I object, Uncle Seth?" asked Mr. Hotchkiss, laughing. "She's your boat."

"Oh, I forgot to tell ye, this is an amachure race and they wouldn't let me sail her, and I reckoned mebbe Sam would like to. I never see a boy take so to a sailboat, and he sails her fustrate too. They'll let me go along with him, but I ain't supposed to touch the tiller. We kinder go along for ballast," he grinned. "The other fellers will have old timers aboard too, so that will be fair enough. Sam knows

a heap about a boat, for the short time he's been runnin' one, and I'd like to have him try it. The Cynthy B. used to be a mighty pert kind of a boat and I believe if I coach him along durin' the race, he can make her behave. He'd like the experience, I think."

"Oh, he'd like it all right. If you are sure he could give a good account of himself—"

Mr. Hotchkiss began doubtfully.

"Jest what do you mean by that, Mr. Hotchkiss? If you mean win, course I'd like to see him do that, but if he don't, it won't hurt him none to git beat, will it? If he ain't gut stuff enough in him to stand a wallopin'—" Uncle Seth was growing almost indignant.

"You are right, Uncle Seth," Mr. Hotchkiss hastened to say. "It doesn't matter if he loses,

as long as he does his best."

"He will do his best, never mind about that. He may git a leetle excited, that's natural, but as for losin' his head, Sam won't do that. Besides I'm goin' to be there and mebbe that'll steady him some."

"Of course it will be all right," agreed Mr. Hotchkiss, "and, as you say, you will be

aboard. I want that boy to be able to handle a boat, for I intend to get him one a little later if his love for sailing seems to stick with him."

"Then that's all settled. Now, as for his gittin' over likin' to sail a boat, I'll say I never see a feller that did really like it ever lose his love for it. If he don't have the hankerin' while he's away from the ocean, it only takes jest a sniff of sea air to put him right back in a relapse," declared the Captain with a grin.

"Couldn't I go along as extra ballast, Uncle

Seth?" asked Sam's father.

"Sartin you can, and it will tickle Sam turribly to have you aboard. You'll like it too, for it's good sport with a fresh breeze. I tell ye, it beats any other kind of racin' all four ways. I'll find Sam and tell him," said Uncle Seth, as he went out of the house.

The day of the boat race came with a fine steady wind. Uncle Seth was jubilant. He watched the weather vane at intervals all the forenoon and reported to Sam and his father that it was just the wind to make the "Cynthy B. step out right pert."

The course for the racing catboats was from a buoy, a few rods off the wharf, to another buoy four miles to the westward and return. Uncle Seth telephoned the yacht club in the morning and was told that if the wind held as it was, almost due west, that this would be the route. The old skipper had explained to Sam carefully about the start and the general rules to be followed.

"You see it's like this, Sam, the race is scheduled to start on the dot at three o'clock. At five minutes of three, a gun goes off and that means git ready on your taps. The idea is to cross the startin' line as near as you can to the stroke of three, when the second gun goes. You'll want to set your watch with the starter's so there won't be a second's difference. Keep tabs on the time: play your boat 'round as near the line as you can. Hover right round it so when the second gun booms, over ye go. The start may mean quite a lot to ye, and you don't want to git over the line ahead of the gun, for if you do, you'll have to turn about and cross the line ag'in."

Sam and Uncle Seth had been over the course many times, during the week, with the

same westerly wind that was blowing to-day. The old skipper showed the boy where the tide ran strongest: where it would hinder and where it would help.

"If the wind is a bit to the norrud, you want to keep over there, on your fust tack, away from that p'int with the grove on it, for those trees shets off the wind a lot. Git away from the bunch of boats all you can, for you want all the wind you can git, without gittin' it second-hand. You don't want 'em to take the wind out er your sails," he smiled.

With Sam at the wheel, and with Uncle Seth and Mr. Hotchkiss as passengers, the Cynthia B. sailed up near the starting buoy a quarter of an hour before the race was to start. The other boats were already there, skipping and dipping about, trying the wind like gigantic birds preening themselves for a long flight. Veteran skippers were aboard all the boats, who, like Uncle Seth, were to act only as advisers of the less skilled sailors. Many of these men were well acquainted with Sam's instructor and called out to him.

Sam grew red under some of the remarks of these old cronies of Uncle Seth's, when they were bitingly sarcastic, or when they meant to disparage the sailing qualities of the *Cynthia B.*, for Sam loved the little craft he had learned to sail, and thought her the most wonderful boat afloat.

Uncle Seth grinned at Sam and said, "Don't mind them fellers, Sam. It's jest their way of bein' sociable. They're tryin' us out to see what kinder sports we be. You don't want to git mad when you're goin' into a boat race, for you can't do your best when you're mad. Don't let 'em cord ye and have the satisfaction of gittin' yer ruffled. That would tickle 'em half to death."

Sam was following Uncle Seth's advice and staying in the vicinity of the starting line, when "Boom" went the first gun.

"What's the matter, Sethie?" called one old skipper. "That boat er yourn' anchored, or is your skipper 'fraid he won't be able to pick up the startin' buoy, if it comes on foggy?"

"We gut one anchor out, Oscar. She allus goes so allfired fast her bow gits hot as time, unless I'm draggin' sunthin' to hold her back," promptly responded Uncle Seth. "Never you mind about my skipper pickin' up the buoy, he'll likely pick it up long 'fore you fellers do on the home stretch."

"Let her bob right round here, Sam," whispered Uncle Seth. "There's less'n a minute 'fore the start. P'int her for the line kinder quarterin', and I reckon you'll about fetch it for the gun."

When the Cynthia B. was within three feet of the line Sam was scared. The time seemed to crawl, but the catboat was moving at an alarming rate it seemed to him. He looked at the watch on his wrist for the hundredth time: only a few seconds. If he should run over the line before the gun, that would mean he would have to come about, and before he could cross the line a second time, the others would be all out of reach. Uncle Seth crouched near him, watch in hand. Why didn't that gun go?

"Boom!"

"Give it to her," yelled Uncle Seth.

Sam shoved the wheel hard over, and the Cynthia B. shot across a good two lengths ahead of all the boats.

"That was purty, Sam," exclaimed the old man, gleefully, "elegant, one of the slickest gitaways I ever see." "Whew," said Mr. Hotchkiss, wiping his brow, "that suspense was nerve-racking. That was a fine start. I haven't had a thrill like that in years."

"Lay down," shouted Uncle Seth, himself

lying at full length.

Mr. Hotchkiss, who had started to move over near Uncle Seth, dropped. The old man's tone was that which he might have used years before in bawling out a foremast hand. Sam laughed at the way his father had obeyed Uncle Seth's command, in spite of the fact that the young skipper was grimly giving very strict attention to the tiller and sheet.

"Every bit of wind counts in a race," Uncle Seth explained to Mr. Hotchkiss, apologetically. Some of 'em allow their crews to set up, but I never did. You might think it was a small thing to bother about, but in a close race, that much resistance to the wind might tell the story."

Sam was on the starboard tack, according to Uncle Seth's direction. Only one boat followed their lead: the others started on the port tack. This single boat was two lengths be-

hind. Sam thought this was pretty close.

"Those boats are going in a different direction, Uncle Seth," said Mr. Hotchkiss, fear-

fully. "There's only one following us."

"Yes, they seem to be on the port tack, but that boat follerin' has gut Bill Hinckley aboard, and Bill knows jest as well as I do that there's more wind away from the p'int on this kind of a day. He and I have raced out here day and night for a good many years. If we don't seem to be goin' the way the bunch is, when we turn the buoy you'll find we'll be right up in the sinner's row.

"Keep her full and by, Sam. She's behavin' like a lady, ain't she? Ease her a little. There now, go to it, old gal. Ain't she the purty one though? See her slide. Jimminetty! Look at her heel over. Watch yer wind, boy: now

go on your port tack."

Sam tacked, and the *Esmerelda*, following, did the same. Sam was holding the lead of two lengths, which he had at the beginning.

"Yer see what ye're gut to do, don't yer, Sam? You've gut to head her so she'll cut in ahead of the bunch on this tack. You can do

it. That's the lady, bow to 'em, girlie, shake yer skirts." The old man talked to Sam and then to the boat. His eyes were shining, as he coaxed her and praised her.

Mr. Hotchkiss dared not move since Uncle Seth had yelled his command to lie down. When Sam tacked, however, he scrambled to the other side. Spray drenched them all as Sam held the *Cynthia B*. well up to her work. She was still ahead of the *Esmerelda*, but the distance between had not increased.

"That fellow makes me nervous, Uncle Seth," complained Mr. Hotchkiss, his teeth chattering with excitement. "He's too near. I'm afraid he'll pass us."

"Ain't goin' to do no good to feel nervous 'bout it. We don't want to begin to git anxious till his bow runs alongside our'n. Sam, haul in jest a lettle mite. Easy, watch yer sea and slack off if she needs it. Purty strong breeze, yer know. Look at her caper. She's my lady. Show 'em what you're made of old—, careful, Sam."

The wind sung through her stays. Her mast strained. The foaming water swirled about her stern as she sped on. "Will she stand it, Cap'n Seth?" grinned Mr. Hotchkiss, wet to the skin.

"I'll resk her," said Uncle Seth, his voice trembling with pride. "Sam's usin' good judgment, but she don't need much easin', I'll tell ye. There's good stuff in her. How's it comin' with the Esmereldy?"

"By jove, they fell back," announced Sam's father.

"Bill don't know his boat as well as we do our'n. It belongs to some summer folks, and I reckon they hired Bill. She's a Herreshoff boat and a pealer, but I'll back the Cynthy B. against any of them high-toned craft I ever see."

Sam tacked again, and pointed her straight for the buoy which they were to round. He glanced back. The Herreshoff seemed too close for comfort. If the Cynthia's rigging would hold—! Sam shuddered at the thought. No, he wouldn't even think of such a thing. It had got to hold.

"Don't turn the buoy too short," urged Uncle Seth. "You won't lose nothin' by takin' a leetle sweep. If you try to turn short, you'll sure lose some headway. Now begin to turn

her. Look at her lay over. Oh, my purty

lady.

"Jimminetty, look at that, the feller in the Esmereldy done jest what I told you not to. He took a short turn. Hear Bill cuss him out."

Above the whine of the wind in the rigging, above the slap, slap, of the waves on the boat's sides and the hissing of the sea, came Bill's forceful admonitions to the young skipper of the Esmerelda.

Uncle Seth laughed. "Bill ain't very perticerler when he gits riled. When a feller does sunthin' aboard a boat that Bill thinks ain't right, Bill don't have a mite of patience with him. They ain't goin' to lose much, that feller done purty well."

The Cynthia B., now on the home stretch, scuttled before the wind, with her long boom swung out and her white sail bellying. After her came the Esmerelda, and far behind the two leaders, the rest of the fleet strung out in long procession.

Sam, casting swift glances over his shoulder, thought his rival was gaining. No, on second

look, he believed he was holding his own. Now the *Esmerelda* seemed to shoot ahead quickly, but the *Cynthia B*. responded to the same gust.

The boats were nearing the finish. Sam could see the crowds upon the wharf running about. As they came under the lee of the point, both boats slowed and Sam's father crouched, gripping the gunwale as though by his own strength to help her.

Sam sat on the edge of his seat, grasping the wheel with one hand and holding the sheet with the other, every nerve and muscle tense. He dared not look around for the Esmerelda, partly because he wished to spend every energy on his task of sailing his craft, and partly because he was almost afraid that the Esmerelda was gaining. He kept his eyes fixed on the line of water ahead—the finish.

Nearer and nearer it came as the little white craft pounded the water. "Not more than thirty yards;" calculated Sam—"no, twenty." Now he measured the distance in boat lengths. Nearly abreast the wharf, he first became conscious of the cheering spectators.

#### 210 THE SKIPPER OF THE CYNTHIA B.

Just then a puff of smoke and—Boom! went the finish gun as the Cynthia B. plunged across the line, a winner by three lengths.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE SKIPPER OF THE "CYNTHIA B."

AL, Mr. Hotchkiss, that was a purty good race, warn't it?" grinned Uncle Seth a few days later, as he and the Boston man were sitting in the shade of the horse chestnut tree in the side yard.

"You bet it was, Uncle Seth. I wouldn't have missed it for the world, and I wouldn't have Sam miss winning, either. It was great

sport," he answered, heartily.

"Wal, I kinder wanted Sam to win, and that's a fact. 'Twon't do him no harm. His head ain't easily turned and he don't git chesty as some do. Yes, I'm glad he won, but above all I'm glad he sailed a good race, win or lose. I noticed when you fust begun to go out in the Cynthy B. that you gut kinder nervous when she heeled over right smart and begun

to slide along, but I see in that race that the faster she went, and the more she heeled, the better you liked it."

"I have lost some of my nervousness, I will admit. I have never been about in sailboats much and the tilting of a boat as she rushed through the water was not a pleasant sensation at first, but, as you say, in the race, the more she tilted the better I liked it."

"That makes me think of Aunt Lucretia Ames here in our village. When Aunt Lucretia was nigh eighty, her two daughters that lived with her, begun to look at her as sunthin' purty old and feeble. She was old, but she warn't near so feeble as they thought. They wouldn't let the old lady git tired, and they fetched and carried for her every minute. Wouldn't let her do nothin' for herself scurcely, but wanted mother to rest all she could. Gut the idea that cause she was purty old she mustn't git excited and sech things.

"One summer her nephew, Jim Howard, come home for a visit and come in his automobile. The two daughters had lots of rides in it, and wished all the time that mother

warn't so feeble so she could go. They had thought of her as an old lady so long, and waited on her by inches, that she herself had taken it as a matter of course, as 'twas easier than protest every time one of them brought a cushion for her feet.

"One day after the nephew had talked and talked, he said right out that Aunt Lucretia was goin' to have a ride in that automobile, whether or no. Said it wouldn't hurt her a bit. They give in reluctant and he gut her into the car. 'Twas a runabout, so there warn't no room for them. They urged him to drive slow so's not to joggle the old lady. 'Be careful goin' 'round corners, for you know mother's turrible nervous. Don't drive fast and upset mother's heart.'

"Wal, they started out, and Jim driv jest as easy as he could. He didn't want Aunt Lucretia to suffer from her ride, and she didn't appear nervous or scairt. She was as chatty as you please. While they was talkin', he didn't think about the car and begun to drive at his usual pace. He had her up to twenty-five and still Aunt Lucretia didn't find fault. They went along that way for a spell

and finally she stopped talkin' and looked over the car and said kinder snappy:

"'For the land sake, Jimmy, is this the best she'll do? I thought these craft were speedy. I'd as soon beat to wind'ard in a mud scow.'

"Jim was some surprised and some tickled. Right then and there he stepped on the oscillator, or whatever you do step on, and perceeded to show Aunt Lucretia that she'd do better.

"The old lady hung onto her hat and grinned at Jimmy as happy as a baby with a new kitten. He driv as fast as he wanted to ride himself, and still the poor nervous old lady cackled and laughed.

"'How do you like it, Aunt Lucretia?"

"'Oh, this is a great way to ride,' she hollered.

"'How about that heart of your'n, stopped beatin' yit?'

"'Heart,' says she, 'it's goin' steady as a clock.'

"'What do you think of the auto?' he says.

"'It's quite a boat, Jimmy, and no mistake, but it's the fust craft I ever rid in that had a head wind no matter which way you p'inted her.'

"So you think I was like this old lady, do you?" laughed Mr. Hotchkiss. "Well, maybe I was. Anyhow I liked going fast in the Cynthia B., after we got started in that race."

Just then an automobile drove up to Uncle Seth's gate, and two gentlemen got out and inquired for Samuel Hotchkiss. Some one in the village had directed them to Captain Nickerson's cottage. Mr. Hotchkiss arose and said that Samuel Hotchkiss was his name.

"We want the winner of Thursday's boat race. We are from the Sianna Club," one of them said.

"Oh, yes, that's my son, Samuel," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "but Captain Nickerson here is the owner of the boat."

"We are in a hurry and we'll deliver it to you, then," said he to the Captain. "I suppose it belongs to the owner, anyway."

That evening Uncle Seth brought out the box and placed it at Sam's place at the table. On the box he had written Sam's name. When Sam came in to supper, he found the family just sitting down.

"Hello, what's this, birthday isn't yet?" said Sam, as he opened the parcel. His eyes stared

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in wonder at the large silver cup upon which was engraved the following inscription:

"Sianna Yacht Club"
The Cynthia B.
Winner of Amateur Catboat Race
Twenty-five feet and under
Samuel Hotchkiss, Jr., Skipper.

# CHAPTER XX

#### THE PLAN MATURES

It had been difficult for Sam to find sufficient pretexts for hurrying Uncle Seth away to the sail loft to spend an hour or two some of these bright sunny mornings, but invent excuses he did. On each of these mornings the artist had appeared, to work at painting the loft, while Uncle Seth sat at his bench, gamming or explaining some sailor's knot to Sam.

The old Captain had once remarked to Mr. Hotchkiss, that it took that artist a powerful long time to paint a picture of just one room. He was generally so absorbed in his talk with the father and son, however, that each day when Mr. Merrill picked up his traps and left, he scarcely noticed that the artist had gone.

One day, the Captain suggested to Mr.

Hotchkiss that he would like to see the picture when the artist came again. The Boston man explained that Mr. Merrill always was very particular that no one should see a painting of his until completed.

"Temperamental chaps, these artists, Captain," he said. "Spoils their—their inspiration or er—something to have any one view

work in progress."

"Oh, that's all right. I wouldn't spile his picture for the world. Seems like a real likely feller. I would like to see what kind of a paintin' this old place would make, jest the same," he speculated. "As fer me, I'd ruther have a picture of our settin' room, with everything fixed up tasty, with tidies and sech. Can't account for folks' tastes, though."

"I'm sure he will allow you to see the painting when it is done. In fact, I think he will

want you to," smiled Mr. Hotchkiss.

On the morning of the departure of the Hotchkiss family for their Boston home, Sam had been given strict orders by his father and mother. He was told to keep Aunt Cynthia and Uncle Seth in the kitchen after breakfast, at any cost, until his father gave him the word to allow them to come into the sitting room. They wished to surprise the old couple, and hang the new painting, which had arrived the day before.

Sam was following orders and was entertaining the Captain and his wife with descriptions of his life at home during the winter. He talked fast and furiously, and, as they showed signs of wishing to quit the kitchen, he redoubled his efforts.

"Yer Pa and Ma must be through dressin' and packin' by this time," said Uncle Seth. "Mebbe we'd better go in and visit with 'em a spell afore the stage comes."

"I don't think they have come down yet, really," nervously assured Sam. This was not strictly the truth, but Sam was determined that the two should not enter that room until his mother or father called, even if he had to "stage a fit or something," as he afterwards said.

"I haven't told you how to reach our house, if you should come to Boston and not let us know you were coming, sometime."

"Why, Sam, it ain't likely we should plump ourselves down on yer Ma, without lettin' her know," expostulated Aunt Cynthia. "House-keepers don't always like to have company come in on 'em. It might put her out."

"But you might, you know," protested Sam, and he proceeded to go into minute details as

to how to reach their house.

"Law bless ye, Sam," said Uncle Seth, "I can find my way around Boston. I navigated them waters forty year 'fore you was born. I never bother with no street cars, jest tell me my course. Is it nor'east by east or what from the depot? The p'ints of the compass are the same in Boston as they be in New Zealand, I reckon."

"There," said Aunt Cynthia, as she hung up her kitchen apron, "now we can go in."

Sam was desperate. He stood in the door-

way.

"Why, what's that in the backyard?" he stuttered, trying to think of something else to say. Just then his father called from the other room. Now Sam was as eager for them both to go in as he had been to keep them out. Aunt Cynthia was the first to enter the living-room.

"Good land!" she exclaimed and sunk into a

chair. "Sethie."

"I'm comin', Cynthy, what is it? You sick?"

She sat in a chair with her handkerchief over her eyes.

"What's the matter, dearie?" said Uncle Seth, tenderly, as he bent over her.

"Your picture," she gasped, pointing to the

large oil painting over the fireplace.

"Jimminetty," he ejaculated. "So that's what that feller was doin'."

He and his wife now approached the pic-

ture wonderingly.

"To Aunt Cynthia, with love from the Hotchkiss family," they read upon a card in one corner of the frame.

"It looks jest like you, Sethie," said his wife.
"It seems as though it could talk."

"Wal, I'll be durned," was all Uncle Seth could say.

When Aunt Cynthia leaned her head on Uncle Seth's shoulder and began to weep softly, Sam was very uncomfortable. He had no idea she would take her present as hard as this. He felt a little reassured, however, when he saw his mother and father smiling quietly.

"A body wouldn't judge you liked your

present very well, Cynthy," Uncle Seth re-

marked dryly.

"Oh, but I do. Thank you all. It looks so natural, I feel jest as though I had two husbands and was one of them bigamists," she laughed through her tears. "Won't Robert like it, Pa?"

"I reckon mebbe he'll like it. That old sail loft looks good, even if I didn't clear it up. Yes, with the subject he had to start with, Mr. Merrill done a purty good job. I sure hope that havin' me in a picture won't ruin his trada" he gripped

trade," he grinned.

"Some of these painters don't allus git things right in their pictures, but this feller seems to have," said Uncle Seth, squinting at the painting. "I remember I see some paintin's of boats and ocean scenes and sech once in Boston. They looked harnsome, but, Jimminetty, there was one in perticerler that was funny, and nobuddy but me noticed it. It was a picture of a sailboat sailin' along as nice as you please, with some more boats in the distance, sailin' in the opposite direction. No matter which way any of them boats was

p'inted, they had their booms swung wide out and was runnin' 'fore the wind as though Satan was after 'em. That artist could sure make them boats behave scanderlous, when he set out, defyin' every law of nature," he laughed.

"There's the stage," exclaimed Aunt

Cynthia.

"Wal, good-by, Sam," said Uncle Seth, "wish you could stay a spell longer with us."

"I wish I could, Uncle Seth. I'd like to stay all winter," Sam declared, while a lump kept bobbing up in his throat and giving him the strangest lot of trouble.

"Mebbe you'd git sick of it. Wal, you come down durin' the winter any time yer Pa and

Ma can spare ye."

"Remember, you are coming to us for the Thanksgiving holidays," said Mrs. Hotchkiss, as they were driving away.

"We'll remember, and thank ye kindly,"

replied Uncle Seth.

Uncle Seth and Aunt Cynthia went back into the house and stood before the picture, hand in hand.

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"Do you like it, Cynthy?" he asked at last, softly.

"Oh, Seth, you don't know how I love it, but—"

"But, what, Cynthy?"

"I do wish you'd had on your best pants," she sighed.







